



ACTION PLAN

By creating a food budget, planning menus and shopping wisely, you can save money and enjoy delicious, nutritious meals!

STEP 1: PLAN YOUR MEALS

When meal planning, start with the vegetables you want to serve and add your protein and whole grains from there. Skip the meat and make room for more vegetables! Whole grains and beans provide protein, and they're often more affordable and may require less work to prepare. Burritos, tacos, soups and pasta dishes are family favorites that can easily be made meatless. Many recipes also make enough for you to cook once and eat twice by saving leftovers. Seasonal produce is fresh and tasty, and it's often more affordable. Carrots, potatoes and greens are versatile and readily available. Bananas, grapes, apples and oranges are generally the most affordable fruits year-round.

STEP 2: MAKE A LIST

Before you go shopping, make a meal plan for the week, but be prepared to be flexible — you might encounter an unexpected sale item. Based on your recipes for the week, write down what ingredients you need to buy. Note the quantity of items needed and which coupons you have. Without a list, you're likely to spend more money on impulse buys and waste time wandering around the store. Frozen and canned fruits and vegetables have lots of good nutrients without being too high in calories, and they generally last a long time without spoiling. Plus, they're great to have on hand when you're low on funds or don't feel like heading to the store. Compare food labels and choose products with the lowest amounts of sodium and added sugars. Your family will grab fruits and veggies if they're readily available. Produce that's already cleaned and cut up is especially appealing.

STEP 3: SHOP SMART

Know the different types of grocery stores and the prices they charge. Make shopping as easy as possible, and get to know your grocery store aisles and shelves. Look for aisle markers to help you locate an item. Ask the staff to direct you to save time. Store-brand products may be more affordable, but remember to check the Nutrition Facts label. You may get special savings alerts and discounts. If fresh produce is on sale, decide whether it's better for you to buy in bulk or just buy a week's worth. If you have a recipe in mind to use the produce and freeze it, this can be a cost-efficient time saver for busy weeknight dinners. Otherwise, choose the amount your family can consume before the produce spoils. Follow fresh produce storage guidelines to maximize the flavor and life of your produce! When you get home, compare what you spent to what you budgeted. Adjust your meal planning and budgeting, if needed. Having a coupon for an item doesn't always mean that it's the best.



IDEAS FOR PARTICIPATION

PROMOTE AND BUILD EXCITEMENT

Use email to promote your activities and distribute healthy eating tips. Use the following email templates or get creative and make your own.

Use the materials and posters provided in your toolkit, especially if you're in a workplace or school. Vending areas, cafeterias and break rooms are great locations.

Use your website and/or social media to increase awareness and conversation. Setting a goal or making a pledge are good ways for people to establish a healthy habit.

Ask participants to set a healthy eating goal, such as adding another serving of fruits and vegetables to each meal.

MASTER THE MYTHS

Don't let these falsehoods keep you from getting enough fruits and vegetables on your plate! During a staff meeting, promote a TRUE OR FALSE myth buster conversation.

MYTH – ORGANIC COSTS MORE, SO IT MUST BE BETTER FOR ME.

Organic products cost more because of the increased cost of complying with USDA standards and a decreased yield per acre. Studies have not shown nutrition related health effects from consuming organically produced foods. The American Heart Association encourages consumers to eat a variety of colorful fruits and vegetables, whether or not they're organic.

MYTH – JUICE DOESN'T COUNT AS A SERVING OF FRUIT.

One serving of 100 percent juice can replace one fruit serving. However, juice isn't as filling or nutritious as whole fruit and may add excess calories. Stick to a small glass of 100 percent juice with no added sugars. Combine juice and water to make it go further. enough quantities by Americans.

FRUIT AND VEGGIE CHALLENGE

Keep track and see how many fruits and veggies you're eating. Build a support group amongst your colleagues or department divisions to make it more competitive! If you're not meeting the recommended daily amounts, try to improve your record or challenge to make it a friendly competition! Visit our [Fruit and Veggie Challenge](#) Chart to track your success by listing the fruits and veggies you eat each day.



COMMUNICATION TEMPLATE

Use the templates below to promote your participation in Nutrition Month. Customize it to fit your events. Add a personal touch when possible for greater appeal to your audience.

SUPPORT/ ENDORSEMENT REQUEST

Hello <LEADERSHIP NAME>!

Did you know that more than two-thirds of American adults and one in three children and teens are overweight or obese, putting them at risk for heart disease and stroke as well as many other chronic illnesses and conditions?

Promoting healthier eating in our workplaces, schools and throughout our community is an important way to help people be healthier. The Healthy For Good movement is designed to inspire all Americans to live healthier lives and create lasting change. It focuses on the simple idea that making small, simple changes today can create a difference for generations to come.

During the month of March, the American Heart Association is encouraging Americans to commit to adding color and nutrition to their diet. I would like your support for participating in Nutrition Month with a company wide event kickoff. By participating, we will receive free resources and support from our local American Heart Association to help us get on a healthier path.

Thank you for partnering with me to promote healthier life changes!

<YOUR NAME>

BRIEF ANNOUNCEMENT

Hello <STAFF/DEPARTMENT NAME> -

Heart disease and stroke affect everyone in this country—you, your neighbors and your loved ones. But beating these deadly diseases doesn't have to mean radical fad diets and crazy exercise trends that are only temporary fixes. A long life of heart health is about taking small steps each day to change how you eat and live. As those small steps add up, you'll change your life for the better.

This year during the month of March, we will join the American Heart Association in celebrating Nutrition Month. More details will be coming soon! In the meantime, please visit www.healthyforgood.org for more information on creating life changing differences for generations to come.

Healthiest of Wishes,

<YOUR NAME>



COMMUNICATION TEMPLATE (CONT.)

SECOND ANNOUNCEMENT WITH DETAILS

Hello <STAFF/DEPARTMENT NAME> -

This coming month in March, we will be celebrating Nutrition Month with the American Heart Association. We will join millions of people across the country in taking a step toward a healthier lifestyle. Here's what you can do to join in the celebration!

- Enjoy heart-healthy foods like fruits and vegetables at every meal and snack. Aim for four to five servings of each per day!
- Bring healthier lunches and snacks to school and work.
- Attend our <EVENT> at <INSERT TIME> at <INSERT LOCATION> and commit to live a healthier lifestyle.
- Make healthier choices at the vending machine—avoid salty chips, sugary snacks, and sugar-sweetened beverages.
- If you eat lunch out with friends or co-workers, look for nutrition information on the restaurant's website or menu and select a healthier option in advance.
- Visit heart.org/HealthyLiving and use the American Heart Association's free tips and tools to stay motivated.

Don't forget to mark your calendar for <INSERT TIME> on <DATE> to join us in our celebration at <INSERT LOCATION>.

See you there!

DAY BEFORE EVENT

Hi Team!

Don't forget: March is the start of the American Heart Association's Nutrition Month! Be sure to join us for <INSERT EVENT> tomorrow at <INSERT TIME/LOCATION> to learn how we can lead healthier lives, free of heart disease and stroke.

See you tomorrow!

<YOUR NAME>



COMMUNICATION TEMPLATE (CONT.)

POST EVENT

Hello <STAFF/DEPARTMENT NAME>!

Thanks to everyone who joined us in our kick-off for the American Heart Association's Nutrition Month! We had a great turnout and a lot of commitment to get healthy. <ADD MORE HERE IF DESIRED, e.g., announcement of winners, pledges, etc.> But we can't get healthy in one day. We encourage you to keep up the good work and take advantage of the many resources offered by the American Heart Association. Visit www.heart.org/HealthyLiving to find out more.

Don't forget that part of fighting heart disease and stroke, two of our nation's leading killers, is helping the American Heart Association fund lifesaving research. Go to the [Sacramento Heart & Stroke Walk](#) page to contribute now.

Thanks, and keep eating healthy!

<YOUR NAME>

<YOUR NAME>