



## Nutrition News - by Charlyn Fargo

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### Cutting Food Expenses

In this economy, finances are a stressor, and the food budget is one place you may be able to cut expenses. But what is the wisest way to accomplish that goal? Making poor food choices actually increases your risk of diabetes, heart disease and high blood pressure. So when you cut your food budget, don't cut out necessary nutrients.

Dr. Kristina L. Sargent from ChicagoHealers.com offers the following tips for low-cost nutrition:

— Stay on the perimeter: To choose the healthiest foods, stay on the perimeter of the store. You don't really need to make your way into the aisles — where the processed stuff is located. Why tempt yourself to spend money on food without nutrients, which stresses your body?

— Cut out processed foods: foods, chips, muffins, cookies, soda, sports drinks and other beverages. Most of those foods don't have many nutrients, like vitamins and antioxidants, and they actually rob your body of nutrients as your body tries to process them.

— Meal plan: Start by planning about a week's worth of meals and be sure to include breakfast, lunch if you pack your own, dinner and snacks. You can save time by building up a recipe file with your favorite dishes. You can use cookbooks, print out online recipes or keep copies of recipes in a special folder on your computer. Grab the advertisements for your local grocery store to see what's on special — you can save even more money by planning some of your meals around those sale items.

— Buy frozen foods: With frozen foods, you don't have to worry about spoilage and you will be getting more of the nutrients your body needs to combat stress.

— Buy in bulk: Buy chicken and ground meat in bulk, freezing it in family-sized portions.

— Cut coupons: Look for online coupons as well as the coupons in newspapers and magazines.

— Choose cheap meat: Choose cheaper, leaner cuts of beef. You will reduce the amount of saturated fat in your meals (which is better for your health). The cheaper cuts of beef need to be cooked at lower temperatures and longer periods of time. They are perfect for beef stews, soups and in crockpot meals.

— Use your own water: Buy a water-filter pitcher instead of expensive individual bottles of water.

— <http://nutrition.about.com/od/recipesmenus/a/nutritionbudget.htm>

Q and A:

Q: If I skip the frosting on cake, will I remove most of the calories?

A: Calorie content of cake and frosting vary substantially depending how they're made, but you may avoid about a third of the calories by skipping the frosting.

Some frostings are primarily powdered sugar, while others contain substantial amounts of butter or shortening, which increase calories significantly. Frosting alone can add anywhere from 150 to 400 calories on one slice of cake.

When you make cake, leave it unfrosted. Sprinkling it with a dusting of powdered sugar will reduce calories, and it still tastes delicious. Or top the cake with fruit. Pass extra fruit for people to top their own slice, for sweetness with lots of nutrients. For a typical 9-inch cake cut in 12 slices, even without frosting, each slice still has more than 250 calories. So, don't think of it as "diet food" just because it's unfrosted. Don't use that notion to justify having an extra slice.

With or without frosting, another major influence on calorie content is portion size. For a typical cake, cutting portion size in half will reduce calories even more than omitting the frosting. If all you want is a sweet taste, you may be surprised how satisfied you feel with just two or three bites eaten slowly and savored; then put your plate away. If you only have cake occasionally, it may not be a big influence on your weight. But if you

workplace, family or social group serves cake frequently, shifting how much or what part you eat — and even how often you eat any — could be an important part of your weight control strategy. — American Institute for Cancer Research

## RECIPE

Flank steak makes me think of grilling. And even if it's too cold to fire yours up, think about doing this Maple and Soy-Glazed Flank Steak, from Cooking Light's latest issue, on an inside grill:

1 (1 pound) flank steak, trimmed

1/4 cup less sodium soy sauce

3 tablespoons maple syrup

2 tablespoons sake or dry sherry

2 teaspoons dark sesame oil

1 teaspoon Sriracha (Asian hot chile sauce)

1/8 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

Cooking spray

Preheat broiler or indoor grill. Pierce steak gently on both sides. Combine steak and next 6 ingredients (through pepper) in a shallow dish; turn to coat. Marinate at room temperature 20 minutes, turning occasionally. Remove steak from marinade; reserve marinade. Place steak on a broiler pan coated with cooking spray. Pour marinade into a small skillet; bring to a boil, stirring well. Cook over medium-high heat 3 minutes or until thick and syrupy.

Brush steak with half of glaze; broil 5 minutes. Turn steak over and brush with remaining glaze; broil 5 minutes or until desired degree of doneness. Place steak on a cutting board; let stand 5 minutes. Cut steak diagonally across grain into thin strips. Yield: 4 servings (serving size, 3 ounces).

Per serving: 232 calories, 23.4 g protein, 11.9 g carbohydrate, 9.1 g fat, 45 mg cholesterol, 0.2 g fiber, 580 mg sodium.

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