

Don't blow your food budget or your diet

With supermarket prices at an all time high and obesity rates skyrocketing it makes sense to tighten your financial belt both at the checkout and when it comes to your waistline.

And really, it's very easy, all you need is some forward planning and insight into the tricks of the supermarket trade.

According to dietitian Amanda Clark, saving money at the supermarket checkout and keeping your diet under control go hand in hand.

"It's easy to be tempted by all the extra foods you don't need to buy," Amanda said..

"These extra foods can add hundreds of unwanted calories to your daily intake, contributing towards weight gain and adding a hefty amount to your shopping bill."

Following the supermarket savvy tips below is a good way to start.

1. Stick to the outside perimeters of the supermarket - that's where you find the basic foods like fruit and vegetables, dairy products and meat. Processed foods will always cost more.

2. Skip the aisles with lollies, biscuits and soft drinks - these are luxury calories, calories you don't need. But you can have something little if you really want it and you budget for it. If it's not in your calorie or financial budget don't risk looking.

3. Supermarkets know the eye level and reach level for our children - either standing or in the trolley. So keep children busy by giving them their own little shopping list, from the healthy food aisles. Same applies to partner, keep them involved so they don't get bored or persuade you to buy what you don't need'

4. Choose a checkout lane without snacks on display - research shows that there is a good chance of impulse buying at the checkout that's why there is always something deliciously tempting on display.

5. Create a list before you leave and plan your menus from a healthy cookbook, sticking to your list will not only save money and calories, it will also save time.

6. Stock up on low calorie staples and buy in bulk when your regular items are on special - good quality mince meat is not so expensive when you get the portion size right. 100g of lean mince could cost about \$1.00. Rice, pasta and sweet potato are low cost carbohydrate choices. Iceberg lettuce gives you more for your money than the fancy ones. Choose vegetables on special and in season to fill half your plate.

However, there's clear evidence that the bigger the pack the more you will eat, so don't stock up on tempting luxury items.

7. Make home brand your preferred brand. Some home brand items are just as good as the higher priced brand named products. Pasta, rice and canned tomatoes are good examples of this.