

A healthy bang for your buck

IN tough economic times people's diets tend to deteriorate as cheaper, less healthy, processed options are substituted for the staples.

Budgeting at the supermarket is a huge first step towards planning healthy meals for your family and dietitian Amanda Clark has offered some tips which will help you stretch your health dollars further.

"The first step is to plan your meals for the week and only buy what you plan to eat, skipping the lolly, biscuit and softdrink aisles altogether, so that every time you go to the pantry, the right ingredients are there for you all week," she said.

"When thinking about snacks, focus on fruit and dairy choices such as apples, bananas and yoghurt.

"You can have a lot of fun using cookbooks as part of the planning process, and they can help you make

clear decisions about what you buy for morning teas, afternoon teas and suppers for the whole family.

"Not only does planning lead to healthier eating, but by being organised you get to feel a bit proud of yourself and it can lift the mood a little.

"The biggest tip though, is not to fall into the fast-food trap.

"Low-cost takeaway foods are fine for an occasional meal, but they use cheaper, less healthy ingredients than we'd ever use at home, so the few dollars you are saving can really end up costing a lot in terms of health."

She said preparing your own meals did not have to be complicated or time consuming, with simple options often the best, especially early in the day.

"Toast and healthy toppings or cereal and fruit are the best way to start the day, while for lunches the ideal is healthy soups, salads or sandwiches," she said.



FUN FACTOR ...

a focus on planning meals and fun with cooking can help families enjoy nutritious alternatives to the fast food trap, even while times are tough.

HERE'S a recipe for inexpensive but hearty winter

shredded; 1 zucchini, thinly

Combine rice, onion, mince, carrot, feta, sauces, egg and basil

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