

## Saving Money on Good Nutrition

By Theresa Tsingis, D.C., M.S.

**S**hocked that a decent gallon of milk costs as much as gasoline? Here is a potpourri of ways to cut your costs while still eating healthy, nutritious foods:

- Cook one to two meatless meals a week. Meats (and some cheeses) tend to be the most expensive items in a shopping cart. These foods should be organic whenever possible though, because of their high status on the food chain (see the last article, "Dinnertime and DNA"). Beans, peas, lentils, nuts, and seeds all contain protein and more fiber, minerals and vitamins. They also cost less than meats. If you get gas and bloating from eating these foods, "Beano" is one name of a group of products that reduce that reaction. See recipes for tasty meatless dishes.

- Make one of your meat meals turkey-based. Turkey costs less, contains less saturated fat, and is a ready substitute for ground beef. Chili, Sloppy Joes, tacos, enchiladas, and many other meals can be made using turkey meat without compromising on flavor or texture. Those dishes also allow you to incorporate other healthy foods into them, like different vegetables.

- Get to know where your favorite healthy foods cost less. Shop at large membership stores for organic products. Organic milk costs about 25-40% less at these stores. A local trader also carries organic products, such as eggs, at lower costs, yet other stores, even supermarkets, are rising to that challenge due to competition. Farmers markets carry fresh, organic and relatively local produce. They can also be a "greener" food source due to support of local economies, using less gas to transport food, etc.

- Another way to save money, time and effort in the kitchen and eat healthily, is to buy in bulk, cook and then freeze several meals. It takes a bit of planning, but saves you time and money in the long run. The key is to not overcook, and when you reheat the dish, add fresh snips of herbs, cheese or other condiments for zip and flavor. Examples of freezable meals are stuffed shells, enchiladas, quesadillas, chili, lasagna, teriyaki salmon, pasta sauce, minestrone and other soups. (Note: potatoes do not take to freezing too well. Besides, they are high in ready sugar content and relatively low on the nutrition scale).

Moving from "Saving money" to "Saving your future" - Grilling can be hazardous to your health (sorry, wish it wasn't true!). Many people grill frequently to reduce fat used in cooking and because grilled meats are tasty. Grilling however, causes the formation of "heterocyclic amines" (HCAs), a chemical group attributed to several types of cancers, including stomach, colon, breast and pancreatic. HCAs form when cooking beef, chicken, pork and fish at high temperatures. Grilling occasionally is probably fine, and I have not found information

on HCAs in grilled vegetables, as the problem seems to stem from the chemical changes in muscle proteins during high temperatures.

A combination of partial microwaving and then baking at 350 degrees is one way to cause less formation of HCAs. For more information, check out the National Cancer Institute's website.

<http://www.cancer.gov/cancertopics/factsheet/Risk/heterocyclic-amines>

### Onward to some recipes for tasty meatless dishes:

#### *Jane's White Bean & Escarole Saute*

Good enough to impress company with your meatless meal skills

- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 3 Tb olive oil
- 1 15oz jar white beans
- 2 heads escarole, chopped
- 2 cups chicken or vegetable stock
- 2-3 tsp thyme
- 1 tsp salt

Saute garlic, onions and thyme in olive oil til soft; add escarole til wilted. Add rest of ingredients and simmer til escarole is cooked and liquid is absorbed to your liking. **Serves 4**

#### *Turkey Sloppy Joes*

Kids love 'em!

- 1 pound ground lean turkey, organic if possible
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 2 Tb high-heat canola oil
- ¼ - ½ cup organic ketchup
- 1 ½ Tb organic brown sugar
- 2 tsp powdered mustard
- Whole wheat burger buns

Saute onions in canola oil til soft, add ground turkey and break up with a fork while heating. Add rest of ingredients to taste. Serve over burger buns and with a green salad. **Serves 4**

#### *George and Sylvia's Mushroom Nut "Pate"*

An appetizer or lunch in itself

Served with vegetables and whole wheat crackers, makes an elegant appetizer.

- 2 Tb olive oil
- 1 lb mushrooms (half white and half portabella is a good combo)
- 1 small onion, chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 cup slivered almonds
- 2 more Tb olive oil
- ¼ tsp oregano
- ¼ tsp thyme
- dash tabasco sauce
- dash of sweet sherry
- few sprigs parsley for garnish

Saute onions, garlic and then mushrooms in 1 Tb olive oil until liquid evaporates. Add sherry and let it evaporate for a few seconds. Set aside.

Coarsely chop almonds in food processor; set 2 Tbs of them aside. Continue chopping rest of almonds drizzling in the 2 Tb of olive oil until well blended. Add other ingredients and blend in processor until pate consistency. Transfer into a bowl, stir in reserved almonds, and sprinkle with chopped parsley. Makes one cup.



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