FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Holly Jay
Nutrition and Health Education Specialist
University of Missouri Extension – Cass, Henry and Johnson Counties
816-380-8460
jayh@missouri.edu

Harrisonville, MO

Savvy Shopping Saves You Money

You have just spent a long day at work and realize you need to go to the store for the one item needed for tonight’s meal for your family. Going after work is such a busy time and you only need one item. Your head starts to hurt just thinking about it. Does this ever happen to you? It has for me. But there is an easier way to be prepared for making nutritionally sound meals for your family.

Make a menu for the week’s meals. Take into consideration what you have on hand in your pantry, frig and freezer. Consult with the store circulars for the best deals and fit the sale items into your weekly meal plan. Clip coupons and look for in store specials that may not be advertised.

When planning use a variety of preparation methods depending on how much time you may have each day to prepare your meals. If you have a limited amount of time think about a crockpot meal or a make ahead casserole that can be placed in the oven for quick and easy preparation.

Menu plans should include foods from all food groups each day, a variety of colors, textures, temperatures and preparation methods for each meal. You would not want to have chicken with mashed potatoes a roll and corn. The meal is all one color think about adding variety to your meal.

An alternate plan would be an herb roasted chicken on brown rice with vegetables, a lettuce and apple salad, dinner roll and fresh fruit yogurt parfait. This meal has all 5 food groups, lots of color and texture as well as hot neutral and cold temperature foods.

Try to select foods that are in season or on sale. This will help with your weekly budget. If you select a lettuce salad for one meal think of how you can fit lettuce into another meal thus utilizing the remaining lettuce.
Menu plans should also take into account what your family has scheduled during the week. If you know you will be out of town or at a ball game a sit down meal with a lot of preparation may be best on another night.

One way to make meals quick is to prepare ahead of time. Do all of your onion chopping or meat browning on a weekend when you have more time. Then during the week you can quickly prepare sloppy joes, tatter tot casserole, or tacos by reheating the hamburger meat and onions already prepared.

When you plan meals you can often save money if you buy in bulk. Remember you must use all the food before it spoils or buying in bulk is not saving you money. Selecting a large bag of potatoes when you will only use one per person for a baked potato may not be cost effective. But planning to use the potatoes in other dishes throughout the week would be cost effective.

When you have your meals planned, make a shopping list. Look at what you have on hand and make a list of those items needed from the store. Your list will help you stay focused on what you need for the week and deter unnecessary purchases.

When you go shopping follow a few simple guidelines:

Have a snack before you go so you will not be hungry.

Shop alone.

Shop during times the store is not as busy.

Buy store brands when possible or items on sale.

Compare unit pricing.

Buy in bulk if you can use it all or save it for later.

Stay away from end of isle items which may not be the best deal.

Look for in store sales or specials.

Read food labels for the best nutritional value.

Stick to your shopping list avoiding unplanned foods such as sweets or convenience foods.

When you shop with a menu in place and stick to your list you will spend less time in the store and make fewer trips to the store during the week. The time saved can be spent with your family doing the things you enjoy and making memories for a lifetime. Remember Savvy Shopping Saves You Money.
If you have questions about menu plans or would like more information on this or any other nutrition related topic please visit www.extension.missouri.edu, or stop in or contact me at the Missouri Extension Service Center in Cass County - 816-380-8460. I would be glad to help you utilize menu planning basics and become a Savvy Shopper.

University of Missouri Extension provides equal opportunity to all participants in extension programs and activities, and for all employees and applicants for employment on the basis of their demonstrated ability and competence without discrimination on the basis of their race, color, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, genetics information, disability or status as a protected veteran.

###