

Atkins cost saving tips

The Atkins diet has a lot of health benefits, but it is not exactly easy on the wallet. Fresh meats are some of the most expensive items in the grocery store and when you follow Atkins, you'll need to purchase a lot of them. However, there are simple steps that you can take to cut costs on this low-carb plan.

First of all, be creative in your meal planning. Remember that most diet books are written to entice readers to try new combinations of foods. The recipes within those books contain the most expensive ingredients. You don't have to cook like a professional chef in order to be able to experience the benefits of the Atkins diet. There are many simple recipes that you can make that are within the plan and cost much less than the ones shown in the diet books. If you modify the meal plans with the books, you can enjoy the low carb lifestyle on a budget.

One of the most important steps to take is to buy your meats in bulk. When you stock up on large packages of ground beef, chicken and fish you cut down on your protein costs. You can separate the large packages into small freezer bags and freeze them in meal-sized portions. Two to four chicken breasts in a bag are easy to defrost and make a good-sized meal. You can also cook ground beef in many different varieties and freeze the cooked portions. Try doing a portion of the meat with taco spices, another portion with hamburger spices and the third portion with Italian spices. That way you'll be able to use lots of hamburger meat and still have variety in your diet.

Also, look at less tender cuts of meat to trim costs in your grocery money. While fillet mignon may be tasty, it doesn't fit into every budget. Less tender cuts of beef and pork make excellent crock-pot meals, and using a slow cooker will help tenderize them.

Look to alternative protein sources like eggs and tofu. Both of these items pack a powerful protein punch for a fraction of the cost of meats. Nuts are a great protein source as well, but they can become expensive very quickly. Some recipes call for expensive macadamia nuts and cashews. Walnuts, peanuts and almonds contain just as much protein for a fraction of the cost.

Mixed vegetable salads will make a large portion of your daily Atkins meals. While it may be tempting to buy bagged salad that is already chopped, you are going to be paying \$2 to \$3 per bag. You can buy three heads of different types of lettuce for the same cost and make the equivalent of six bags of prepackaged salad. Also, consider investing in a salad spinner. This handy device will make homemade salads crispy and satisfying.

Be creative with your menus and use produce and meats that are on sale. If

you've got a recipe that calls for chicken breasts and turkey happens to be on sale, go ahead and substitute this week. Make sure to carry an acceptable food list with you the grocery store so you can tell whether a sale food is an okay substitution on the Atkins plan.

When you go to the store, you can also cut costs by limiting your purchase of low-carb packaged foods. These items are really expensive, and sometimes full of harmful chemicals. They may also contain hidden carbs which can stall your weight loss efforts. The Atkins plan can be effectively followed without using any of these products. Unless it's a special occasion, skip them all together.

Finally, its best to plan your meals and your shopping trips so you can buy your groceries in an effective manner. Going to the grocery store unprepared or, even worse, hungry can spell disaster for your budget. Plan each week's menu out ahead and time and then buy what you need to make those meals.

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