

# Protein

All foods made from meat, poultry, seafood, beans and peas, eggs, processed soy products, nuts, and seeds are considered part of the protein food group. MyPlate and the Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommend 2 to 5 ounces of protein foods per day for children; teens and adults need 5 to 6½ ounces.

Each of these provides a 1 ounce MyPlate protein equivalent:

1 ounce cooked meat, poultry, or fish	1 pound lean hamburger yields 12 ounces @ \$5.49/pound	= \$.45 per ounce
½ ounce nuts or seeds	1 pound walnuts @ \$8.99 ÷ 32	= \$.28 per ½ ounce
1 medium egg	1 dozen @ \$1.59 ÷ 12	= \$.13 per egg
¼ cup cooked beans, peas, or lentils ( <i>canned</i> )	1 (15-ounce) can @ \$.89 (7¼-cup servings)	= \$.13 per ¼ cup
¼ cup cooked beans, peas, or lentils ( <i>dried</i> )	1 pound ( <i>dried</i> ) @ \$1.29 (20 to 28¼-cup servings)	= \$.05 per ¼ cup
1 tablespoon peanut butter	16 ounces @ \$2.49 (28 tablespoons)	= \$.09 per tablespoon

## EAT SMART: PRACTICE PORTION CONTROL

Cooking more than a 2- to 3-ounce portion of meat per person encourages us to eat more than we need for good health. Because meat is often the most expensive part of the meal, filling up on meat can challenge your food budget.

The amount to buy for your family depends on the amount of bone or fat the meat contains.

- **One pound serves 4 if it has no bones or fat:** ground beef, stew meat, cubed steak, boneless ham, fish fillets, luncheon meat
- **One pound serves 3 if it has some bones and fat:** pork chops, chuck roast, picnic ham, turkey parts, bone-in fish
- **One pound serves 2 when it has many bones or more fat:** whole chickens and turkeys, spare ribs, ham hocks.



## MAKING HAMBURGERS FOR YOUR FAMILY OF 3?

Plan ¼ pound per person or ¾ pound for a family of 3. If you buy a pound package, either freeze ¼ pound for another meal or cook it all and save one portion for another meal.

## SERVING A ROAST TO 4 AND WANT PLANNED LEFTOVERS?

Purchase enough for 8 servings, such as a chuck roast that is about 2½ pounds. Set aside the extra portions and serve only the amount to be eaten at the meal.

# SPEND SMART. EAT SMART.®

spendsmart.extension.iastate.edu

## CHECK YOUR \$-SAVING SKILLS:

1. The most economical source of protein is:
  - a. Eggs
  - b. Ground beef
  - c. Dried beans
  - d. Canned beans
  - e. Peanut butter
  - f. Walnuts
2. How many pounds of pork chops do you need to serve 3 people?
  - a. 1 pound
  - b. 2 pounds
  - c. 3 pounds
3. Buying the lowest cost ground beef is always the best choice.
  - a. True
  - b. False
4. Which of the following has the lowest price per pound?
  - a. 10-ounce package of sliced turkey meat for \$3.49 per package
  - b. Sliced turkey at the deli counter for \$4.99 per pound
  - c. 2½ pounds of fully cooked lean ham for \$8.73

(Answers on next page)

All prices in this publication were collected in central Iowa, Fall 2017. Although prices vary depending on date and location, the comparative differences generally follow a similar pattern.

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## SPEND SMART: STRETCH YOUR MEAT AND POULTRY

### Practice your meat-stretching artistry

- Mix meats with beans, lentils, rice, pasta, and vegetables.
- Use beans or a mixture of beans and ground beef in tacos.
- Make stir fry and use only  $\frac{1}{2}$  to  $\frac{3}{4}$  as much as in a typical meat serving.
- Add rice to meatballs; bread crumbs or oatmeal to meatloaf.

### Choose either dried or canned beans

- Both canned and dried beans make good meat substitutes and provide the same amount of fiber, protein, and other nutrients.
- Dried beans are less expensive but take more planning to use.
- Buy no salt added canned beans to reduce sodium intake.

### Watch for sale prices

- Check store ads to see what meats are on sale and base meals on them.
- Stock up—if you have the freezer space to do so. Meat and poultry, including unopened vacuum packages, can be frozen in their original supermarket packaging. If storing more than a month or two, place the store package inside a freezer-weight plastic bag or overwrap it with airtight heavy-duty foil, plastic wrap, or freezer paper; label with contents and date.

## SPEND SMART: RINSE HIGHER-FAT GROUND BEEF TO REDUCE FAT

Buying ground beef with a high percentage of fat is usually less expensive per pound but it yields less meat. However, you can save with the cheaper ground beef if you rinse and drain it after browning.

Follow these easy steps to remove excess fat when cooking ground beef for spaghetti sauce or other uses.

- 1 Put cooked meat in a colander that is set over a large glass bowl.
- 2 Fill a large cup with hot water and pour over the meat. Let drain.
- 3 Use rinsed beef as desired (*or freeze for later use*).
- 4 Chill the bowl of waste water. Remove resulting fat layer, wrap in newspaper and discard in trash. Remaining water can be poured down the drain.



Photo courtesy of the Iowa Beef Council

## EXPLORE THESE RESOURCES FOR MORE IDEAS

### Iowa State University Extension and Outreach

- **Spend Smart. Eat Smart.**—[spendsmart.extension.iastate.edu](http://spendsmart.extension.iastate.edu)
- **AnswerLine**—[www.extension.iastate.edu/answerline](http://www.extension.iastate.edu/answerline) (or, call 1-800-262-3804)
- **Nutrition and Wellness**—[www.extension.iastate.edu/humansciences/nutrition](http://www.extension.iastate.edu/humansciences/nutrition)
- **Extension Store**—[store.extension.iastate.edu](http://store.extension.iastate.edu)

**Choose MyPlate**—[www.choosemyplate.gov](http://www.choosemyplate.gov)



# Answers:

## CHECK YOUR \$-SAVING SKILLS

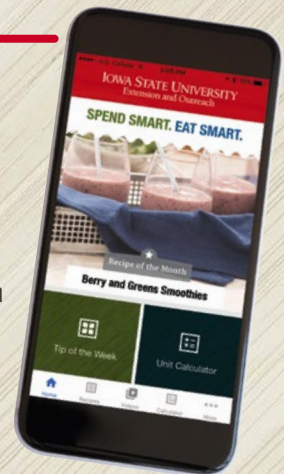
1. **C—Lowest to highest: dried beans, peanut butter, canned beans, eggs, walnuts, ground beef**
2. **A—1 pound**
3. **B—False: lowest cost often has highest fat content; use it for crumbles that can be drained.**
4. **C—The lean ham costs only \$3.49 per pound; ask the meat department to slice it thin. The 10-ounce prepackaged turkey costs \$5.58 per pound. (\$3.49 per 10 ounces = \$.35/ounce x 16 ounces/pound = \$5.60).**

## EAT HEALTHY AND STICK TO YOUR BUDGET!

The Spend Smart. Eat Smart. app can help you at home and at the grocery store to

- Choose and prepare fresh fruit and vegetables
- Find recipes and meal ideas
- Compare products to find the best price

Download for free from your app store.



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