

Health Tip: Everyday Ways to Save Money

It's no secret that we are living in challenging financial times. Although the average consumer had no hand in creating the current financial climate, today's lean economy can motivate us to re-examine our personal spending habits. The following common-sense tips can result in short and long-term financial savings; many may also improve your health and the environment.

Everyday ways to save money at home:

- **Adjust your thermostat.** In the colder months, 65-68 degrees in a sweater and socks is quite pleasant. In the summer, adjust your thermostat to 78-80 degrees and use fans.
- **Use CFL or LED light bulbs.** While these bulbs may cost more initially, they have significantly longer life than normal incandescent bulbs and use far less electricity.
- **Re-examine your cable TV package.** Over the next week, monitor your T.V. watching. The next step might be to trim down the premium features of your entertainment package.
- **Toss your spare change into a fun savings bank or glass jar.** You could accumulate money to help with holiday or vacation expenses.
- **Make coffee at home.** With a medium latte averaging upwards of \$5.00, the daily coffee drinker can save over \$100 per month by brewing their own. Better yet, switch to a healthier alternative, like a homemade yogurt and fruit smoothie. Try it out twice a week.
- **Write a list before you go shopping.** Avoid grabbing items not on the list, and you'll leave the store with big savings. Use coupons where you can and enjoy foods in season.
- **Don't spend big money entertaining your children.** Most children can be entertained very cheaply. Make a game out of ordinary household items, like tossing pennies into a jar. What your family wants most of all is your time.

Everyday ways to save money at work:

- **Take lunch to work.** The average price of lunch out averages over \$5.00. Those who eat out everyday are spending at least \$25 a week on lunch - as well as ingesting extra salt, fat and calories hidden in most restaurant food. Bring lunch two or three times a week to start.
- **Take advantage of payroll deduction.** Sign up for your employer's retirement plan. Set up an automatic deposit with your bank to seed your savings and emergency funds.
- **Maximize the benefits of your job.** Most people aren't aware of all of the resources available to them at work. You might benefit from travel and entertainment discounts.

Other simple actions to save money:

- **Properly inflate your car tires.** Most car tires are five to ten PSI below the normal level; when inflated properly, you can improve your gas mileage by up to 5%.
- **Limit yourself to one ATM withdrawal per week.** Instead of hitting the cash-back button for \$35 every time you go to the supermarket, make your money last.
- **When you subtract a check from your account, round up the amount to the next dollar.** That way, you'll always have a slush fund. Your bank might even do this for you. Sounds like small potatoes, but if its \$100 every couple of months, that's money in the bank.
- **Use your public library.** The library is a free resource for all sorts of things. You can meet people, use the internet, find local newspapers, and keep up on community events.
- **Make your own gifts.** With a bit of thought and effort, you can make bread, candles, soap and other gift items easily and inexpensively.

Making a commitment to save money can be emotionally difficult, but the act of saving money is also empowering. It ultimately gives you financial security and the freedom to make choices.

Sources: LifeWork Strategies (www.youradvocate.com), and Washington and Shady Grove Adventist Hospitals. The Health Tip of the Week is for educational purposes only. For additional information, consult your physician. Please feel free to copy and distribute this health resource.