

# Happy, Healthy, Hopeful

## Stretching Our Food Dollars

Activities and Tips  
for the Whole Family



Supported by

 UnitedHealthcare



A creation of

**SESAME WORKSHOP™**

Sesame Workshop is the nonprofit organization behind Sesame Street, the television show that has been reaching and teaching children since 1969. Sesame Workshop has a mission to help kids everywhere grow smarter, stronger, and kinder. We're active in over 150 countries, serving vulnerable children through media, formal education, and philanthropically funded programs, each grounded in research and tailored to local needs and cultures. For more information, please visit [sesameworkshop.org](http://sesameworkshop.org).

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## Dear Parents and Caregivers,

All parents and caregivers want their children to thrive. Caring grown-ups take joy in seeing their children grow and develop in healthy ways, and share a commitment to supporting their children's well-being in every sense. Feeding the whole family healthy food is one important way to do that.

But there can be hurdles. Lack of access to enough healthy food is a challenge for more than 10% of households in the United States. Food insecurity can affect anyone.

If you're experiencing this, you are not alone. Help is available. When you reach out for support, you're modeling bravery to your children. You can let them know that while they may not always have the food they want, you are working hard to make sure your family has the healthy food you need.

Sesame Workshop and UnitedHealthcare have created this resource to help make these tough times a little easier. In these pages, you'll find tips and strategies, along with activities to do together with children.

**For more resources about healthy eating on a budget, visit [SesameStreetInCommunities.org](http://SesameStreetInCommunities.org)**

## Super Shopping Strategies

With a little preparation, you can set your family up for good nutrition and healthy eating habits even before you enter a store. Involve children in making lists and choosing foods from the shelves. Walk in as a team!



# A Little Planning Goes a Long Way

Consider these ideas for stretching your grocery dollars.

## Before You Shop

**Take a Look:** Before you shop, look at your fridge and pantry and notice what you already have. Make a list together (consider how food assistance such as WIC can help you make choices). Ask:

- ✓ How can I use what I already have in meals for the week ahead?
- ✓ What fruits, vegetables, or dairy should I use soon, before they go bad?
- ✓ What foods are we going through quickly? Would it make sense to buy these in bulk?



**Make a Meal Plan:** Try to use the same ingredients for more than one meal. For example, a pot of beans can be used for three different meals: soup, quesadillas, and a bowl of brown rice and beans.

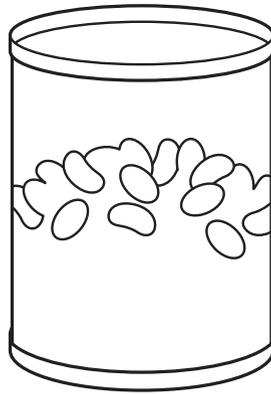
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**Look for Deals:** Use grocery store apps and weekly newspaper insert coupons to find the most cost-effective places to shop. Many stores offer discounts or reward points.



## At the Store



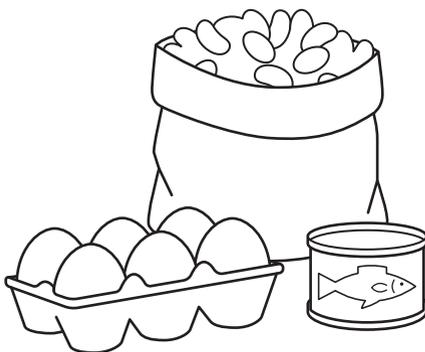
**Go Generic:** The cost of store-brand foods and beverages is up to 25% less than name brands. They can also be equal in quality, especially for baking supplies such as flour.



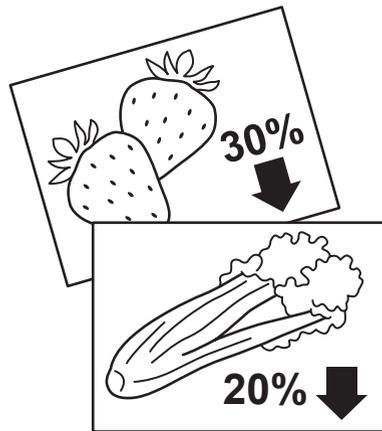
**Buy in Bulk:** You can get more servings by adding brown rice to soups or stews, frozen vegetables to pasta dishes, or beans to burgers. If you have shelf space, consider buying these staples or other foods that you go through quickly and consistently.



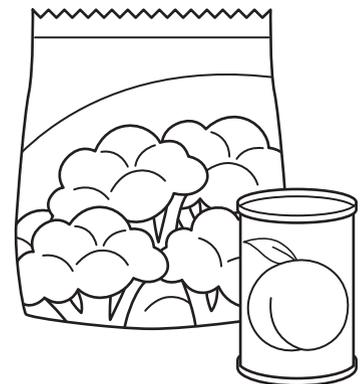
**Shop Seasonal Produce:** Most fruits and vegetables are available all year, but some cost less when they're in season. For example, tomatoes cost less in late summer, apples cost less in the fall.



**Choose Low-Cost Proteins:** Dried beans, eggs, peas, lentils, canned fish (unsalted is best) and peanut butter (unsalted is best) are healthy, inexpensive sources of protein.



**Check Unit Prices:** Most stores print a price-per-pound or price-per-unit cost in small print below the larger item price. Compare brands to find out which offers the best overall price.



**Choose Canned and Frozen:** Canned and frozen fruits and vegetables (without added sugar or salt) are just as healthy as fresh, and much less expensive.

# Sometime & Anytime Foods

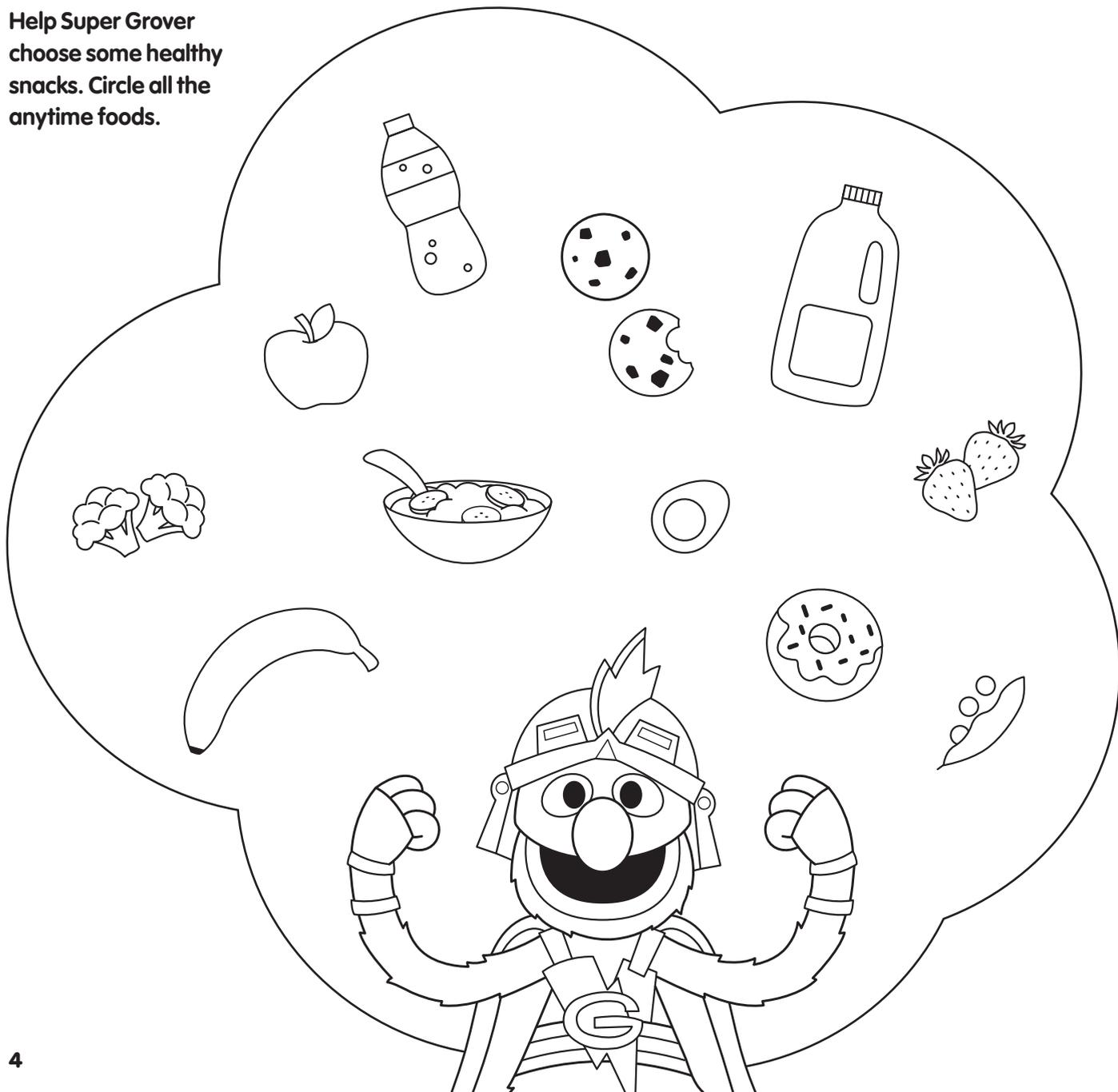
Super Grover needs lots of energy. So do we!

Some foods have lots of good things in them that give our bodies energy and help keep our bodies healthy and strong. These are called **Anytime Foods**.

**Anytime Foods** are foods we can eat every day, like fruits and vegetables, lean proteins, and whole grains.

**Sometime Foods** are foods we should only enjoy once in a while as a special-occasion treat, like cookies, chips, sodas, and snacks high in sugar, fat, and salt. The energy we get from these foods doesn't last that long.

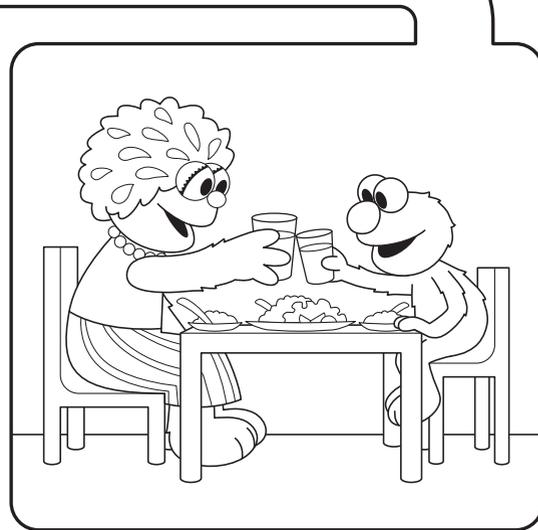
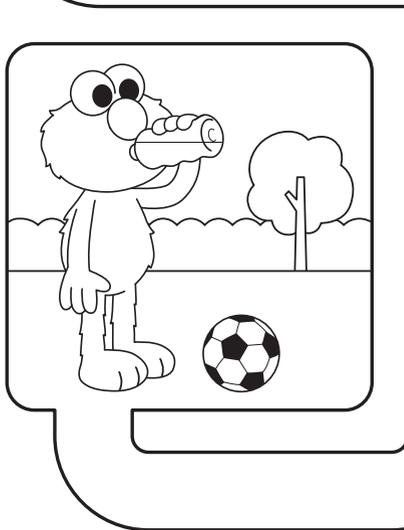
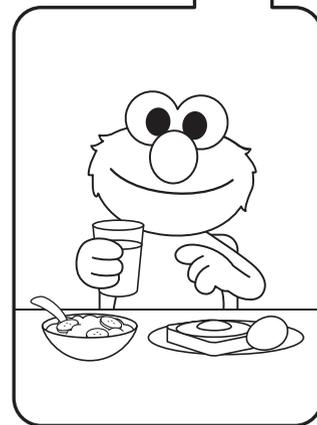
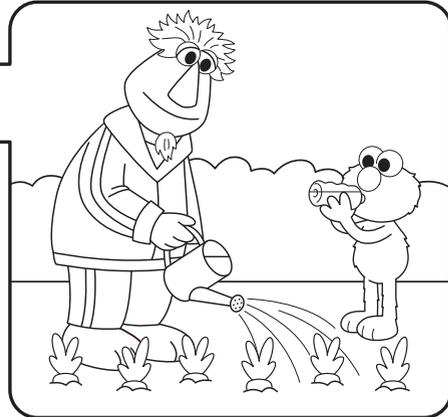
**Help Super Grover choose some healthy snacks. Circle all the anytime foods.**



# Water Is the Way to Go!

Plants, animals, and people all need water to grow.  
So do monsters! Water helps keep our whole bodies healthy.

Take Elmo  
through his  
day, drinking  
water along  
the way!



**Healthy eating includes healthy drinking!**

Water and skim milk are the healthiest drinks for children.

In most places in the U.S., tap water is just fine! You'll save money and help the environment by avoiding bottled water.

Try to avoid sports drinks and soda, and keep in mind that even 100% fruit juice is high in sugar.

# Eating With the Five Senses

When we eat more slowly and pay attention to our food, we digest our food better and notice when our stomachs are full. Enjoy your food with each of your five senses.

**Draw a food that feels smooth:**

**Draw a food that tastes sour:**

**Draw a food that is your favorite color:**

**Draw a food that smells good to you:**

**Draw a food that makes a crunchy sound:**



# I Can Eat a Rainbow!

You don't have to wait to see a rainbow in the sky—  
you can make a rainbow on your plate!

**Make your own healthy rainbow by coloring  
in these Anytime Fruits and Vegetables.**



# You're Not Alone!

Health and well-being are rights for all children, but food insecurity affects many families. Reaching out for help to take care of your family is a brave act of hope. Here are good places to start.

## SNAP & WIC

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, also known as food stamps) and Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) help families buy healthy food.

- ❑ [fns.usda.gov/snap](https://fns.usda.gov/snap)
- ❑ [fns.usda.gov/wic](https://fns.usda.gov/wic)

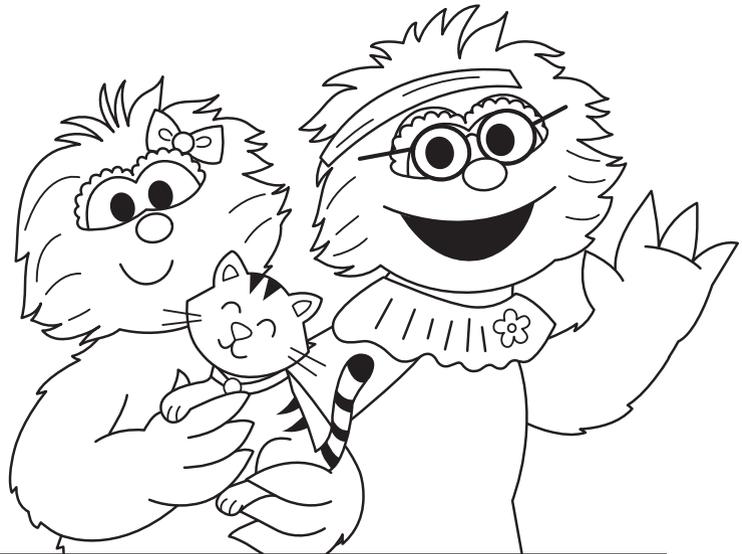
### Free School & Summer Nutrition Programs

- ❑ The Child and Adult Care Food Program helps children (0–18) and adults get nutritious meals and snacks through childcare and afterschool programs.  
[fns.usda.gov/cacfp](https://fns.usda.gov/cacfp)
- ❑ School Breakfasts:  
[fns.usda.gov/sbp/school-breakfast-program](https://fns.usda.gov/sbp/school-breakfast-program)
- ❑ School Lunches:  
[fns.usda.gov/nslp](https://fns.usda.gov/nslp)
- ❑ Afterschool Meals:  
[fns.usda.gov/cacfp/afterschool-meals](https://fns.usda.gov/cacfp/afterschool-meals)
- ❑ Summer Food Service Program:  
[fns.usda.gov/sfsp/summer-food-service-program](https://fns.usda.gov/sfsp/summer-food-service-program)

### Food Pantries

Feeding America is a network of food banks. Type in your zip code and find places to get free food, plus dates and times for pickup.

- ❑ [feedingamerica.org](https://feedingamerica.org)



## And...

- ❑ MyPlate has healthy eating tips for the whole family.  
[myplate.gov](https://myplate.gov)
- ❑ The American Academy of Pediatrics offers information on health and wellness for families.  
[healthychildren.org/english/healthy-living](https://healthychildren.org/english/healthy-living)
- ❑ National Alliance for Hispanic Health invites you to join the Buena Salud Club!  
[healthyamericas.org/buena-salud-club](https://healthyamericas.org/buena-salud-club)
- ❑ 1,000 Days has information on nutrition from pregnancy to toddlerhood.  
[thousanddays.org/for-parents](https://thousanddays.org/for-parents)
- ❑ The Farmers Market Directory lists farmers markets near you (many accept WIC and SNAP).  
[wicworks.fns.usda.gov/resources/farmers-markets](https://wicworks.fns.usda.gov/resources/farmers-markets)