

Topic: Money Management

Activity: Understanding Unit Prices in Supermarkets

Objective

- ✓ Participants will learn the basics of how to use unit prices to compare food prices in supermarkets

Lesson Time

20 minutes

Materials

- Photographs comparing two supermarket price tags showing both retail and unit prices, one per small group (link to sample PDF included)
- Optional: price tags showing unit prices from local supermarkets

Lesson

1. Read aloud or explain the following:

It can be difficult to manage your money when shopping in U.S. supermarkets. Because there are many different companies and products, customers have to pay close attention to make sure they are getting the most for their money.

A product's *retail* price shows the actual amount of money customers pay for a product. Some supermarkets show a number called the "unit price" next to the "retail price" to help shoppers compare prices of similar products. The *unit* price shows how much the food costs based on standard measurements like weight. Check that the unit prices you compare are based on the same measurement (such as *pounds* or *ounces*.) Usually, the product with the lower *unit price* is a better value.

By looking at unit prices, you can compare different products to understand their true cost. Unit prices may be confusing at first, but gradually they will help you save money on food.

Reflection Questions

2. Read the following, leading discussion and giving further explanation if needed:

- What is the difference between a *retail* price and a *unit* price?
- Why can unit prices help you save money on food?

3. Break participants into small groups. Distribute "Retail Price and Unit Price of Rice and Fish" and read the following for groups to discuss:

- Where are the retail prices?
- Where are the unit prices?
- Which fish would you buy?
- Which bag of rice would you buy?

4. Ask a spokesperson from each group to share their group's answers. Discuss as necessary.

Variations

- Discuss examples of real price tags showing unit prices from local supermarkets.
- Take participants to a local supermarket using unit prices (not all do) and have participants look at unit prices to decide what they would buy.