

The Green Notebook

Let's Talk Money & Choices

I often have heard the comment "I can't afford to buy organic" or other similar statements about purchasing more natural and "green" products. While I completely understand, I always raise the point of the choices we make.

Let's say, for instance, that your family budget won't allow a few organic produce purchases (like apples, strawberries and other produce that might be a good choice to purchase non-conventional), organic milk, organic ketchup (both great places to start to cut your chemical exposure) and say a more natural soap and shampoo. Step back and look at what other purchases you are making. Do you buy packs of soda, lots of snacks, sweets or meat for every meal? Do you eat out a lot? Do you find yourself grabbing fast food quite a bit when you are in a rush? Go cold turkey and quit. What if you redirected those "convenience food" dollars to the purchase of some organic items at the store or local farmer's markets and maybe even some more natural personal care products (which are now easy to find at local stores)?

Coupons are a huge help, too. I clip, cut and save coupons from the Sunday paper but also from sites online, including my grocery store's website. You can also find "natural" product coupons on sites such as Mambo Sprouts. In addition to redirecting our dollars away from sugary snacks, sodas, fast food and other "junk foods," I also shop the sales in the "natural" section of our local grocery store. I may not be able to purchase a lot of organic foods, but I make choices depending on the sales and the coupons I have.

I also try to make a once a month visit to Trader Joe's and Whole Foods to shop their sales and grab a few items which I can't find here in Delaware. It's tough to exercise self-restraint when wandering the aisles at Whole Foods (my neighbor calls it "Whole Paycheck"). Yes, it is dazzling and I want just about everything, but the prices can be high so I really have to go in with a list in hand and, again, make some good choices.

Even with these tips and ideas, I completely realize that budgets are what they are and, given our economy at the moment, many families are facing tough choices when it comes to food and other grocery items. But remember, eating well and using more natural products can be affordable, it often just takes time and effort—something I know, personally, is hard to come by.

If you have any money-saving tips and ideas we can share with readers, please let me know by emailing me at _____ . Thanks for sharing!

Tuesday Trippier lives in Delaware, is a writer and mother of three, soon to be four, with a special interest in green living.