

Small Steps to Health and Wealth™ Colorado



Say “No” to Super-sizing Handout Nine Ways to Downsize Spending

1. **Reduce Interest on Credit Cards:** Downsize spending so that you can pay off your entire bill in full each month to avoid interest charges. If you are unable to pay off a large balance, pay as much as you can.
2. **House Purchase:** Think of buying a home as buying adequate shelter, not as an investment. Super-sizing a home, one larger than your family needs, increases not only the purchase price, but long-term costs for interest, taxes, insurance, maintenance, utilities, furnishings, etc.
3. **Appliance Energy:** Consult *Consumer Reports*, available in most public libraries, for information about specific appliance brands and models and how to evaluate them, including energy use. There are often great price and quality differences. Look for the yellow Energy Guide and ENERGY STAR labels, which can save up to 50% in energy use.
4. **Home Energy:** An audit can identify ways to save up to hundreds of dollars a year on home heating (and air conditioning). Ask your electric or gas utility if they audit homes for free or for a reasonable charge.
5. **Automobiles:** You can save thousands of dollars over the lifetime of a car by selecting a model that combines a low purchase price with low depreciation, financing, insurance, gasoline, maintenance, and repair costs. Ask your local librarian for new car guides that contain this information.
6. **Telephone/Cable:** Once a year, review your bills for the previous three months to see what charges are normal for you. Call several companies to find the cheapest plans that meet your needs.
7. **Prescriptions:** Brand name drugs are usually much more expensive than their generic equivalents. Ask your physician and pharmacist if a less expensive generic or an over the counter alternative is available. Investigate costs for mail-order prescription plans.
8. **Life Insurance:** If you want insurance protection only, and not a savings and investment product, buy a term life insurance policy.
9. **Travel:** Compare low-cost carriers with major carriers that fly to your destination. Remember, the best fares may not be out of the airport closest to you.