

## Let Your EAP Help You Embrace the “New Frugality”

If the 1990's were the years of conspicuous consumption – the current decade is looking like the age of frugal living. In a recent Associated Press survey of economists, most agreed that the new frugality will persist even as the economy gains firmer footing. Sean Snaith, economics professor at the University of Florida, observes that we've all been spooked by the severity of the recession and the days of running up high credit card debt are over.

But frugality need not equate to deprivation! Many of us are successfully learning to live well on less. In fact, household savings are steadily increasing as we learn to purchase more wisely and the USDA reports that despite rising food prices, the average annual percentage of family income spent on groceries has remained constant. So as a society, we're learning to make necessary changes. Your EAP offers many opportunities to save – and have fun doing it!

- **Eating In:** Summer is a great time for purchasing fresh fruits and vegetables at local and regional farmer's markets. Find one in your area by going to [www.theEAP.com](http://www.theEAP.com) then select the red button that says **Employee & Family Login**, register and click on **Tools for Tough Times**. Scroll down to the Frugal Living section, select the **Farmers Market Search** and enter your local address. And by the way, the USDA suggests that if produce has a thin skin that you eat, such as apples, spend extra for organic. If it has thick skin that is discarded, such as bananas – save your money. It's all about exterior pesticide residue. While you're in the Frugal Living section, be sure to also click on **20 Healthiest Foods for Under \$1** and **50 Ways to Save Money on Your Grocery Bill**.

- **Eating Out:** In his very informative website, [ultimatecheapskate.com](http://ultimatecheapskate.com), Jeff Yeager reveals that 45% of the average family's food budget is spent on meals prepared outside the home. But your EAP can even help you slash the cost of dining out. While in the Frugal Living section, click on **Dealcatcher** and enter “restaurant” in the search engine. Various national chains such as Denny's or Planet Hollywood often have coupons posted here or you can click on [Restaurant.com](http://Restaurant.com) which offers coupons representing significant savings.



- **Clothing, accessories, and electronics:** The Dealcatcher site features daily “deals” for EAP members from companies ranging from Dell to Dunkin' Donuts. Be sure to check out this site especially before purchasing an expensive item such as a laptop. Chances are you'll find the product you want at a huge savings. Again, one can be frugal by being a wise shopper!
- **Gasoline:** Even frugal people deserve a vacation this summer! Click on **Gas Buddy** in the Gas and Driving section of **Tools for Tough Times** – enter the cities you plan to travel through and discover the stations with the cheapest gas.

Your EAP is available 24/7 via Web or phone to help you navigate today's choppy waters. Log on or give us a call to discuss your situation confidentially.