What does it mean to save money when I shop?

Saving money means that you find ways to pay less money when you shop. Saving money means paying the best price for the things you want to buy.

Saving money also means deciding **not** to buy everything that you want.

Can I save if I always buy the cheapest product?

No. Saving money does not mean always buying the cheapest product. The quality of the product you are buying matters, too. Sometimes, something that costs a little more money will last longer. That might make it a better value.

For Example

- I buy one pair of shoes. That pair of shoes will last one year. Or, I could buy a new pair of shoes every six months.
- The shoes that last a year cost $50. The shoes that last six months cost $30 a pair, which is $60 a year.
- In a year, I might save $10 by spending more on shoes that last longer.

What are coupons?

A coupon offers a deal on certain products or at certain stores. A coupon might be a piece of paper that you cut out of the newspaper or a magazine. A coupon also might be a code you enter on a website.

What can I do to save money when I shop?

A good way to save money is to compare prices. You compare prices by looking at the price of something at more than one store. Something might be "on sale" at one store. But another store might sell the same thing for less money.

When you are shopping, you can ask:

- **What is the best price you can give me?** The store might give you a lower price.
- **Will this item go on sale soon?** You might be able to wait for the sale and save money.

Sometimes, you might find a better price online. When you see a price online, find out if you will need to pay extra money to have it sent to you. This cost is called "shipping." If you add the shipping cost to the price, is it still a good deal?

Do coupons really help me save money?

A coupon can help you save money on certain products or at certain stores. But coupons can help you save only if you are buying something you need. Do not buy things just because you have a coupon for them.

For Example

Here is an example of how a coupon works:

- The clothes you want cost $55 (plus tax)
- Your coupon is for $10 off a $50 purchase
- Your purchase is more than $50.

You pay $45.
You saved $10.

Where do I find coupons?

You can cut coupons out of the newspaper or a magazine. You also can find coupons online at:

- the website for the company that makes the product
- websites for stores that sell the product
- coupon websites that list coupons for lots of stores

To use a coupon online, you often need to type your "coupon code" or "promotional code" into a box. This happens while you are "checking out" and entering the information to pay for what you are buying.

What else should I know about coupons?

Some stores have "double coupon" days. On these days, you might get twice as much money off.

For example, if you have a coupon for 50 cents off of a certain brand of orange juice, you would get $1 off on double coupon days.

Look for double coupon days at grocery stores. Ask at the store whether they have double coupon days.

Many coupons have an "expiration date." After that date, you cannot use the coupon.

Should I always wait for things to go on sale?

A "sale" is when a store sells something for a cheaper price. Sometimes you can wait for an item to go on sale. That way, you do not have to pay as much for it.

Before you buy an item that is "on sale," ask yourself:

- Would I want to buy this if it were not on sale?
- Are there other products like this that I like better?
- Have I checked the price at other stores? Is the "sale" price the best one?
- Do I have the money to buy this, even at the lower sale price? Will buying this add to my debt?
- If I don't buy this, what could I use the money for instead?

A sale price is not a good price if you do not need the item. A sale price does not help you save money if you cannot afford to buy the item.

You can save money when you shop if you compare prices at different stores, use coupons, think about whether you really want something, and ask questions.

How do I start saving?

Before you buy something, ask yourself:

Have I:

- looked for coupons?
- checked the price at more than one store?
- asked about when it might go on sale, or thought about waiting for a sale?
- thought about what else I might spend my money on if I do not buy it?

When I find a good deal, should I buy the product?

Maybe you should buy it. Maybe not. Before you buy, think about whether this is the right deal for **you**.

Ask yourself:

- Am I buying this just because it is on sale?
- Do I really want or need this thing?
- Can I afford this product, even on sale?
- Do I want to buy it, even if it adds to my credit card debt?