

Tips To Remain Frugal At The Grocery Store

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Reporting Paula Ebben

BOSTON (CBS) – It seems like the bad economy is never going to end, and many of us are doing any and everything we can to save money.

But many of us might be trying too hard.

Groceries keep taking a bigger bite out of the family budget.

WBZ-TV's Paula Ebben reports

Now many of the chain pharmacies are trying to capitalize on shoppers frustrations, and are offering deep discounts on a growing number of foods.

Here's the problem, the pharmacy hopes you're going to pick up a few "non sale" items while you're there, and that can be a trap

Take this example. Five random items at CVS, not on sale, cost us \$23.43. The same things at Stop and Shop went for \$17.72.

Newton based financial planner Dana Levit says marketers know shoppers can be lured with those initial sale items.

"They know what drives us, so that is why we need to be rational."

Shoppers admit it can be hard to be rational at the warehouse stores.

Psychologist Ramani Durvasula says shoppers can get so wrapped up in what they think they're saving that they buy all kinds of things they don't really need.

In the end — you end up with a pantry full of food that might go bad or unused

Coupons can also make a product look cheaper than it really is.

You might be getting a brand name, but if you were happy with your other product, and it was cheaper, buying the brand name isn't such a great deal.

Tightfisted Americans are also flocking to dollar stores looking to score a bargain. But consumer reports found that some foods and medicines were past their expiration date so you have to be careful

So if we're so intent on saving money — why are so many of us making these little mistakes that can add up big? It's all about the thrill of the hunt.

Levit says, “When people are reacting from a highly emotional state though, because that's really what this is creating, is a highly emotional state, you don't always make the best decisions.”

The best defense is to be practical. Make a list of what you truly need — and stick to it.