

As a group, food stamp participants tend to be attentive shoppers who have developed preferred and economically sound food shopping practices, and who follow a specific shopping routine. They often make shopping lists or work from longstanding “mental” lists, check newspaper advertisements and store circulars to compare food prices, and shop at several stores to obtain the best food prices for various food items.

In one survey of food stamp participants, 84 percent reported that they looked in the newspaper for grocery specials at least occasionally, 79 percent used store discount coupons, 90 percent stocked up on bargains, 80 percent compared prices across different stores, and 76 percent used a shopping list.

Program participants were more likely to use these careful shopping practices either fairly often or on most shopping trips than the overall population. Reported use of careful shopping activities varied only slightly across different groups of food stamp participants (households with elderly, welfare, earnings, or income below poverty).

Percent Reporting Activity At Least Occasionally	Food Stamp Participants	All Consumers
Look for specials	84%	76%
Use store discount / cents-off coupons	79	80
Stock up on bargains	90	92
Compare prices across supermarkets	80	74
Go to different stores for advertised specials	77	71
Use a shopping list.....	76	n/a

Source: Ohls et al (1999). [*Food Stamp Participants' Access to Food Retailers*](#). Report prepared for the Food and Nutrition Service, USDA.