

# COUPONING 101

## THE BASICS OF COUPONING

### What Are Coupons?

- A coupon is a ticket or document that can be redeemed for a financial discount or rebate when purchasing a product. Typically, manufacturers use coupons in retail stores as part of marketing and sales promotions.

### Why Should You Coupon?

- It provides an opportunity to save a lot of money.
  - You can combine coupons to save more money.
  - Couponing should help you manage your food costs and reduce the amount of money you have to spend on products.
  - Coupons can save you money on more than just groceries.
- It is a great way to try new products at a fraction of the cost.
- Manufacturers want you to use coupons because they want you to try their products or get them back into your mind if you haven't used them for a while.

### NOTE:

- Plan to start small or you may get overwhelmed or obsessed with couponing. Let it grow naturally as you gain a rhythm with it.
- Couponing should be a choice you make to save your family money and NOT become a second job.

### Where Can You Find Coupons?

- Your mailbox.
- Online websites.
- Local newspapers.
- Magazines.
- Mobile devices.
- Direct from manufacturers – call or email and share your story with them on how you love their products and they will often send you coupons.
- Tear pads in stores (at the front entrance or sometimes right beside the product).
- Internet printables.
- Facebook – manufacturers are looking to create a fan base and often ask for a page “like” in order to receive coupons (it may be best to create a separate Facebook account strictly for couponing, as your feed will get inundated with advertising).
- Peelies/Hangtags – coupon savings found directly on the product to be used right away.
- Product packaging – e.g. cereal boxes, pop cases, granola bar boxes.
- Local events – e.g. Home Show, Western Fair.
- Doctors' and dentists' offices.
- Coupons are everywhere! Once you start to coupon more and more, you will find them.



## How To Organize Your Coupons

**Step 1:** Choose the right binder. A 3-ring binder with a carrying handle will allow you to put coupons in plastic, see-through, page protectors in order to quickly and easily find your coupons.

**Step 2:** Find a layout that works best for you.

- **Category Layout** – In your binder, separate the coupons based on various categories that make the most sense for you and your shopping habit. Categories might include “Household Products,” “Baby/Children,” “Beverages,” etc.
- **Expiry Date** – You may want to have your binder set up by the month. Highlight the expiry date and file it in the appropriate month.
- **Combination Layout** – Sort by category and expiry date.
- **Alphabetical Layout** – You could sort the coupons by brand name or by the item. For example, soap would be in the “S” category.

Other supplies you might need to organize your coupons include:

- Highlighters – to highlight the expiry date and any other information that may be important at the time of check-out
- Plastic page protectors or baseball card holders
- Paperclips
- Dividers
- Scissors
- Pens/pencils
- Tape
- Elastics
- Calculator
- Magnifying glass
- Pencil case
- Sticky notes

## What Not To Do

- **Clip `n Forget Method** – You gather coupons, clip them, but end up doing nothing with them but stuff them in in a drawer in your house. You soon forget about your “stash” and they eventually expire.
- **The Bottom Of The Purse Method** – This method happens when you find a good coupon at a store and put it in your purse to keep it “safe.” Next spring, you find it when you’re cleaning out your purse to start the new season.
- **The Forgotten Folder Method** – With this method, you organize your coupons in a folder, but never consult the folder before putting a meal plan together or making a trip to the grocery store.

