



Extension

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

Using Digital Coupons

To lower your costs when shopping for groceries and other items or services, you can use a coupon, which is a ticket or code that gives you a discount. Coupons can lower the price of a purchase by a certain dollar amount or a specific percentage. A study by Consumer Reports found that a third of Americans say they use coupons frequently ([Consumer Reports, 2023](#)).

In the past, coupons were mostly found in newspapers, mailings, and other printed materials. While printed coupons still exist, 57% of U.S. adults use digital coupons at least a few times per year ([CivicScience, 2024](#)). Digital coupons can be found through social media, store emails & texts, and mobile apps. This sheet covers important tips about using digital coupons.



A great way to find digital coupons is to check the store's website or app. Many stores offer digital discounts on their products. A 2022 study of 50 supermarkets found that 2 out of every 3 stores offered weekly digital-only discounts.

However, many stores require you to join their email list, loyalty program, or create an account on their website or app before you can use the discount on a purchase. For example, gas stations may offer discounts on their food products and gas prices for loyalty program members.

Coupons are offered by stores which sell products, and manufacturers, which make those products. Sometimes, you can use a store coupon and a manufacturer coupon in the same transaction. You should always read the coupon's details, so you know the expiration date, number of times you can use it, if it can be used with other coupons, and other important information.

Independent mobile apps with coupons are also available. These apps may have coupons or other deals (ex: Buy One, Get One free or at a lower price), offer cash-back rewards (a percentage of the money you spend is returned to you by cash or gift card), compare prices of products at different stores, or search your area to find the lowest local price of your desired products.

Well-known mobile apps for shopping discounts are *Ibotta* and *Fetch*, among others. You can search your mobile app store for a list of available shopping apps.



Anytime you use a new mobile app, you should think about its trustworthiness, how it protects or uses your personal information, any fees it charges (many shopping apps are free!), and if the app is easy to use.

You can talk about using digital coupons, and other financial topics, with your county's financial educator. Visit <https://counties.extension.wisc.edu/> for more information.