Healthy Food Shopping

HEALTH ACTION GUIDE

Running to the grocery store to pick up food for dinner without thinking about what you will actually purchase can spell trouble for a well-intentioned eating plan. It's one example of how unplanned grocery shopping can lead to impulse buying or simply grabbing the same things over and over again. This guide offers suggestions for how you can make your next trip to the market a complement to your healthy lifestyle. It includes a grocery list template that you can use to streamline the food shopping process and make healthy shopping a more simple and cost-saving habit.

GETTING STARTED

It just makes sense. If you stock your kitchen shelves with healthy foods, you'll prepare and eat more healthful meals and snacks. So how do you make it happen? First, determine who's filling the shopping cart. If you're not the primary shopper for your household, share this information with whomever does that job. The hand that pushes the cart controls the food choices.

MAKE A LIST

Begin by listing healthy meal and snack ideas for the week. Create your grocery list from the ingredients you'll need for that week's meals. Cooking larger amounts on days when you have more time can be a timesaver on busy days. Then, before you go shopping, make your list (see suggestions below). Remember snacks! Stock up on nutritious, great-tasting options to have at home and to bring to work.

HEALTHY CART CHECK

Use the suggestions below to help you load your cart with healthy choices. Aim to fill your grocery cart with 80 percent healthy choices. This means that for every 10 foods you add to your cart, at least eight should be good choices. Read labels when you are buying processed foods or even better, choose more foods in their natural state. Best choices in the various sections of the store include:

Fruits and Vegetables	• A colorful variety of fresh fruits and vegetables • Frozen fruits without added sugar or fat • Frozen vegetables without added fat and sauces, including butter, cream or cheese • Canned fruit in its own fruit juice (no sugar added) • Canned vegetables labeled low-sodium • Fruit/vegetable beverages labeled 100% unsweetened juice versus punch, drink or juice blend • Dried fruit
Dairy	• Low-fat (1%) or non-fat (skim) milk • Low-fat, part-skim or fat-free cheeses • Low-fat or non-fat yogurt (preferably plain without added fruit) • Low-fat or fat-free sour cream • Trans fat free buttery spreads • Eggs or egg substitutes

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Meat, Poultry, Fish and other protein sources	**Lean cuts of meat—"select" grade include:** • Beef: flank steak, top sirloin, tenderloin, arm roast, round steak or roast, ground round, ground sirloin, filet mignon • Pork: loin chops, pork loin, tenderloin, center loin • Veal: cutlet, loin chop • Lamb: leg shank • Poultry: white meat turkey, chicken, Cornish hen (without skin), ground turkey or chicken breast • Game meat: bison (buffalo), venison • Reduced/low sodium deli meats containing less than 2 grams of fat per ounce (look for nitrate free) • Fresh or frozen fish and shellfish (unbreaded, not fried) • Soy protein items (e.g., tofu, tempeh, vegetarian burgers) • Canned fish—water packed • Legumes and beans such as soy, kidney, lentils, black, navy, pinto, white, chickpeas* • Peanut butter or other nut butters (without added fats or sugar)
Breads, Cereals, Pasta and Rice	• Breads made from 100% whole-wheat or other whole-grain flour and contain at least 2 grams of fiber per serving • Whole-grain cereals (the label reads whole wheat, whole oats, whole grain, etc.) that contain 3 or more grams of fiber per serving • Unsweetened cereals (with the exception of added dried fruit) made without added fat • Whole-wheat pasta* • Brown or wild rice* • Whole-wheat or corn tortillas
Snacks, Desserts and Baked Goods	• Nuts and seeds • Snacks are unsalted or reduced-sodium varieties (e.g., rice cakes, plain popcorn, pretzels) • Crackers are whole grain, unsalted or reduced-sodium varieties (e.g., rye crisps, whole-wheat matzoh) • Cookies are low-fat, trans fat free varieties (e.g., gingersnaps, graham crackers, animal crackers, fig bars) • High fiber nutrition bars • Desserts are low-fat or fat-free choices, such as frozen yogurt, sorbet, sherbet, low-fat or fat-free ice cream, 100% fruit juice bars without added sugar or cream, angel food cake • Dark chocolate (70% cocoa or more)

*Beware of packaged mixes that may be higher in fat and sodium.

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IT'S IN THE BAG!

What about your household's favorite foods? How would they stack up in a healthful grocery bag check?

First, list the 10 foods you most frequently bring home from the grocery store. Then circle the choices you think would pass the "healthy choices" criteria (nutrient dense and low in fat, saturated fat, sodium):

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

HOW HEALTHY IS YOUR BAG?

If eight or more of your selections are circled, you're making some pretty wise choices.

If seven or less of your choices are circled, you'll want to look for some healthier alternatives to these family favorites. Aim to increase the percentage of healthy foods filling your grocery bag one item at a time.

MAKE A CHANGE

Are there some favorite foods in your cart that you would be willing to swap for healthier alternatives? Write these favorite foods, and your healthier alternatives, on the shopping list below.

MY SHOPPING LIST

Old Favorite

_____

_____

_____

Healthier Alternative

_____

_____

_____

EAT HEALTHY WITHOUT BUSTING YOUR BUDGET

Healthy eating doesn't have to be expensive. Try some of these tips and strategies to make healthy and budget-conscious shopping trips:

- Plan meals and snacks in advance
- Make a list and stick to it
- Use coupons and reward cards, but only for items you would buy anyway
- Buy on sale and in bulk; compare unit prices
- Skip the soda and other bottled or packaged drinks
- Shop on a full stomach
- Buy fresh "in season;" buy frozen "any season"

Shopping Strategy:

Aim to get the most nutritious bang for the buck.

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- Buy less and serve smaller portions—you may be surprised and satisfied with less
- Keep foods safe (refrigerate promptly and watch expiration dates) to prevent waste
- Start a vegetable or herb garden
- Buy more beans! They are the economical super-food and also a good source of protein, soluble fiber and health-boosting minerals
- Put meat in its place
  - Protein is important, but most of us eat more than we need
  - Select fish, skinless white-meat poultry, lean meats, eggs
  - Mix it up by choosing plant-based protein powerhouses such as tofu
  - Stretch your meat budget by making kabobs, stir fry, fajitas, chili and soup
  - Buy in bulk and freeze
  - Try a "Meatless Monday" or "Breakfast for Dinner"

Budget-conscious option: Canned salmon contains healthy omega-3 fats, is available year round and is less expensive than fresh-caught wild salmon.

TAKE ACTION

Print and use the list on the following page to help you make healthy choices. Avoid shopping when you are hungry and focus on the perimeter of the store where you often find most of the fresh foods (less processed).

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GROCERY LIST

produce:

pasta, rice & beans:

deli:

breads & cereals:

dairy:

frozen foods:

poultry, meat & fish:

snacks:

beverages:

miscellaneous:

GROCERY LIST TIPS

To help you make healthy and smart choices, use the STOP, YIELD, and GO system for each section of your supermarket.

avoid | proceed with caution or buy occasionally | fill your cart with these smart choices

Produce: Load your cart with a variety of fruits and vegetables in a broad range of colors for maximum nutrition.

Deli:

S Hot dogs, sausages, salami, bologna, regular fat cheeses, salads made with mayonnaise or dressing.

Y Reduced-fat cheeses, deli meats labeled 95% fat-free.

G Low-fat/fat-free cheeses, salads made with low-fat mayonnaise or dressing, reduced/low sodium deli meats containing less than 2 grams of fat per oz.

Dairy:

S Butter, regular stick margarine, cream cheese, regular sour cream, half & half, whole milk, whipping cream, regular cheese, regular cottage cheese, full fat yogurt.

Y 2% reduced fat milk, reduced fat cheeses, reduced fat sour cream, reduced fat cream cheese.

G 1% low-fat/non-fat milk, low-fat cottage cheese, fat-free cheeses, trans fat free margarines, low-fat/fat-free sour cream, low-fat/fat-free yogurt, eggs (in moderation) or egg substitutes.

Poultry, Meat, and Fish:

S "Prime" or "Choice" cuts of meat, fatty cuts of meat, organ meats.

Y "Select" cuts of meat, lean cuts of meat, dark meat chicken and turkey.

G White meat chicken, turkey, Cornish hen (without skin), fresh or frozen fish and shellfish (unbreaded, not fried)

Snacks:

S Items made w/ butter, trans fats (hydrogenated/partially hydrgenated oils) or tropical oils (palm, coconut, palm kernel) and/or those high in saturated fat and sodium

Y Reduced-fat items, such as cookies and crackers, some baked snacks and microwave popcorn that contain more than 35% calories from fat.

G Trans fat free and other low-fat items containing no more than 3 grams of fat per serving and 1 gram or less of saturated fat. Dried fruits and nuts, low-fat, high fiber nutrition bars.

Pasta, Rice and Beans:

S Items containing more than 50% calories from fat and any item containing trans fat (hydrogenated/partially hydrogenated oils) or tropical oils (palm, coconut, palm kernel) and high in sodium.

Y Items containing 30-40% calories from fat and reduced sodium.

G Items made with whole grains, items containing unsaturated fat (olive, canola, safflower, peanut oils) and less than 30% calories from fat and low sodium.

Breads and Cereals:

S Butter-type rolls, cheese breads, croissants, granola-type cereals, phyllo pastry, biscuits, any items containing trans fats (hydrogenated/partially hydrogenated oils) or high fructose corn syrup.

Y Low-fat granola, breads made with refined grains, cereals with less than 3 grams fiber per serving

G Whole-grain breads, bagels, pita that contain at least 2 grams fiber per serving, plain tortillas, oatmeal, cereals containing at least 3 grams fiber per serving.

Frozen Foods:

S Breaded and fried items, items w/ butter and cream sauces, regular ice cream and full-fat frozen desserts, frozen dinners containing more than 50% calories from fat and 720 mg of sodium.

Y Reduced-fat/non-fat frozen desserts, frozen dinners containing 30-40% calories from fat."

G Grilled or baked fish without breading or butter/cream sauce, grilled or baked white meat poultry without skin or breading, unsweetened fruit, 100% fruit juice bars, vegetables without butter or cream sauces, frozen dinners containing less than 30% calories from fat.

Beverages:

S Any items containing high fructose corn syrup such as regular sodas.

Y Diet sodas, fruit punches, caloric, flavored water and seltzers.

G 100% fruit juices, bottled water, herbal teas, non-caloric flavored waters and seltzers.

This information is intended for educational purposes only and should not be interpreted as medical advice. Please consult your doctor for advice about changes that may affect your health.

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