

Nutrition

fact sheet

Shopping Solutions for Healthful Eating



Consumers today have many choices when it comes to food, especially at the grocery store. With over 30,000 items and numerous brand names, how does one go about choosing foods that are enjoyable, affordable and that provide proper nutrition? Here are some supermarket shopping solutions to help select the most nutritious food options in all aisles of the store easily and quickly.

The List

Before you head out to the supermarket, take the time to make a list. It will save you time, money and headaches.

1. **What's to eat this week?** List out meal ideas for the week, keeping in mind which days you'll have time to cook from scratch and which days you'll be pressed for time to put dinner on the table. When time is short, opt for convenience items and couple a frozen entrée with ready-to-eat produce. And be creative! If you know to plan for pizza one night, shop for salad, milk and fruit to balance out the meal.
2. **Organize the list.** As you create your shopping list, check your menu options against the Food Guide Pyramid to ensure you've remembered everything from poultry to produce. This will help ensure you are purchasing a variety of foods that provide all of your nutrient needs.
3. **Beyond the basics.** Don't forget snacks! Everyone enjoys a little

boost between meals, so stock the kitchen with nutritious, great-tasting options such as low-fat popcorn, nuts and pretzels.

The Strategy

- Don't go grocery shopping when you are hungry. Leave the decisions to your head, not your stomach. It's easier to stick to the list if you are not hungry, so plan to make sure to eat something before you go.
- Set a routine. Establish a day and time that makes it easy for you to move quickly and easily through the store and stay focused on your shopping needs.
- Save Money. Coupon clipping or finding stores that price match are great strategies for saving money. Coupons are also a great way to expand your food choices. Use a coupon to experiment with a new meal item that you wouldn't normally purchase.
- Kids in tow? An enjoyable grocery shopping experience with children is possible! Use it as an opportu-

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Information

The American
Dietetic
Association
Knowledge Center

For food and nutrition
information or for a
referral to a dietetics
professional in your
area call:

800/366-1655

or visit:
www.eatright.org

For more great tips
and recipes:
www.healthychoice.com



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nity to give your kids a lesson in color, smell and names of new foods. Engaging them in the food selection can turn a trip to the store into a great teaching tool about nutritious food choices.

The Labels

The Food Label can be a consumer's best shopping tool. You can compare nutrients and ingredients between similar products, determine which nutrients the food contributes to your total diet, safe preparation methods and much more.

If you want to learn more about reading nutrition facts and other items on the food label, find more information at ADA's Web site, www.eatright.org.

Know the Tricks of the Trade

Knowing how to shop and what to look for in each aisle/section of the store helps guarantee a cart stocked with healthful products. Here are a few simple tips to help you ace the aisles:

■ **Produce** Since fresh produce doesn't last very long, buy only the amount you'll eat over a few days. And, remember, frozen fruits are a great, longer-lasting option.

■ **Meat, fish, chicken, turkey, eggs** Get your protein! These foods are sources of high-quality protein. Stock up on meat, fish and chicken, especially when they are on sale. And don't forget the eggs!

■ **Milk, cheese, yogurt** Call the dairy case Calcium Central. If you don't stop here, your diet may be short on calcium. Including low-fat milk, yogurt and cheese in your diet is an easy way to get your recommended intake.

■ **Frozen** The frozen foods aisle is a great place for convenient, nutritious food choices for any meal occasion—breakfast, lunch, dinner—and even dessert. Use nutrition labels to compare frozen prepared meals and entrees. You'll find that the calorie, fat, cholesterol and sodium of different brands can vary quite a bit.

■ **Bread, Cereal, Pasta, Rice** Your choices within this food group can make the difference between a high-fiber diet and a low-fiber diet. Opt for whole-grain products whenever possible—such as whole-grain breads, cereals, pasta and brown rice—to boost your fiber intake.

■ **Legumes, lentils, nuts** There are a wide variety of legumes, both dry and canned, available in the supermarket. Pinto, kidney or black beans provide fiber, folate and protein. Nuts and peanut butter contain monounsaturated fats, vitamin E, selenium and protein.

■ **Canned foods** Canned fruits and vegetables are great to have on hand because they are similar and sometimes higher in nutrients than their fresh counterparts—and they don't spoil as quickly!