



Food Shopping Tips for Healthy Living

The key to eating well with regularity is preparation. It is now easier than ever for families to eat healthy, nutritious meals. Most ordinary supermarkets now carry organic and healthier brands.

FDA regulations are making companies list trans fat use and other harmful ingredients on labels. There are many selections of pre-cut vegetables that can easily be steamed and tossed with a little flax or olive oil and some culinary herbs for a quick side dish. The key is to know what to look for.

The following are some general shopping tips:

PRODUCE

Organic produce might be more expensive, but it can be a wise purchase, especially with certain foods that naturally store a lot of pesticides. Some examples are: spinach, lettuce, apples, bell peppers, celery, imported grapes, potatoes, and strawberries. The Environmental Working Group provides a shopper's guide to pesticides at <http://www.foodnews.org/>.

Ideally, all produce should be fresh, ripe, in season and locally grown. Frozen organic fruit is a great choice for foods like berries that are very nutritious, low glycemic, but often out of season in most parts of the country.

MEAT, POULTRY, EGGS, AND DAIRY

Although harder to find than produce, free-range, hormone and antibiotic-free meats and organic milk should be used whenever possible.

Eggs should also be organic or from free-range, antibiotic and hormone-free poultry. Because it isn't always easy to get fish high in omega-3 fatty acids into our diets, it is especially beneficial to choose eggs labeled as high omega-3, which means that these important fatty acids were fed to the chickens. Other practical sources of omega-3 fatty acids are walnuts, flax oil, and flax seeds.

SEAFOOD

It is becoming increasingly more important to eat wild-caught, non-farm-raised fish or seafood and especially limit those fish high in mercury from the diet such as tuna, swordfish, and shark.

For people who are used to eating tuna fish several times a week, canned wild salmon which is now in many traditional super markets makes a good alternative. It can be prepared the same way as traditional tuna salad and is high in omega-3 fatty acids.

BUY WHOLE FRESH FOODS

It is always best to buy whole fresh foods whenever possible. In cases where this is not always practical, it is more nutritious to use frozen than canned foods. Certain foods like beans, broths, and sauces are fine from cans or jars when you are rushed and don't have time to prepare from scratch.

TO AVOID

The most important foods to avoid are non-domestic produce as they are almost always sprayed with pesticides (some with DDT which is banned in the US), foods with additives, colors, preservatives, emulsifiers, chemical names that you don't understand, and packaged foods with multiple ingredients including hydrogenated fats, corn syrup and artificial sweeteners.

Look for sugar in products such as sucrose, glucose, dextrose, fructose, honey, molasses, raw and cane sugar and minimize the amounts consumed.



Shopping List: Food to Keep on Hand

Having the right foods on hand makes it easy to put together quick, healthy meals.

REFRIGERATOR

Dairy & Eggs

- Skim or soy milk
- Low-fat cottage cheese
- String cheese
- Plain yogurt
- Low-fat ricotta cheese
- Eggs
- Tempeh
- Tofu

Produce

- Salad greens
- Onions
- Celery
- Garlic
- Spinach
- Tomatoes
- Cucumbers
- Peppers
- Berries in season
- Apples
- Oranges
- Grapefruit
- Avocado
- Other assorted non-starchy vegetables

Meat & Fish

- Smoked wild salmon
- Chicken breast or ground turkey
- Fresh fish

Breads

- Ezekiel or stone ground whole wheat bread

- Whole wheat wraps or pita pockets

Other

- Hummus
- Flax oil

FREEZER

- Veggie burgers
- Frozen edamame
- Frozen berries when not in season
- Frozen veggies if fresh not available

PANTRY

Grains & Grain Products

- Whole grain crackers
- Brown rice
- Quinoa
- Whole wheat pasta
- Oatmeal
- High fiber cereal

Nuts & Legumes

- Almonds
- Walnuts
- Beans, all varieties

Spreads, Dressings & Condiments

- Almond or natural peanut butter
- All fruit jam with no additional sugar added
- Marinara sauce (no sugar added)
- Mustard
- Balsamic vinegar
- Olive oil

- Paul Newman's light dressings
- Salsa

Other

- Vegetable and chicken broth (low sodium)
- Cans of wild salmon and tuna
- Different types of herbal and green, white, and red teas
- Stevia (an herbal sweetener that won't raise insulin)

SPICES

- Bay leaf/basil
- Cardamom
- Cilantro
- Celery seed
- Cinnamon
- Cumin
- Cloves
- Dandelion
- Dill
- Dry mustard
- Fennel
- Fenugreek
- Garlic
- Ginger root
- Oregano
- Parsley
- Rosemary
- Saffron
- Savory
- Sea salt
- Tarragon
- Thyme
- Turmeric