

Healthy and Affordable Grocery Shopping



WIC educator and retail food coordinator, Shellie O'Brien
Laws shopping for fresh produce.

Jefferson County Public Health Nutrition Services offers the following helpful tips for making grocery shopping healthy and affordable.

Plan Ahead, Make a Grocery List: Having a grocery list helps with menu planning and decreases impulse buying. A list also helps you to remember needed items and can cut down on gas-guzzling trips to the grocery store.

Tips for planning ahead:

- Keep a running list of the groceries that your family needs
- Before going to the grocery store, check what foods you already have
- Consider what meals and recipes can be made with the foods on hand
- Find healthy recipes, plan a menu for the upcoming week, and add needed ingredients to your shopping list

- Stick to the list
- Plan one night every week for leftovers

Resources for healthy recipes and planning ahead:

www.ext.colostate.edu/pubs/columnnn/n080703.html

<http://snap.nal.usda.gov>

<http://recipefinder.nal.usda.gov/>

www.kraftrecipes.com

www.epicurious.com

Shop the Perimeter - Fresh and whole foods are stored around the perimeter of the grocery store. Look for fresh produce, lean meats, low-fat dairy and whole grain breads. These foods contain fewer additives and more nutrients than the more processed foods found in the aisles.

Tips for shopping the perimeter

- Buy seasonal fruits and vegetables, and buy only what you'll use. Produce has a short shelf-life and may spoil if bought in bulk.
- Buy lean meats. Lean cuts of beef include chuck, round, sirloin, and tenderloin. Lean cuts of pork include tenderloin or loin chops. The leanest poultry is white meat from the breast with no skin. When choosing ground meats, look for at least 90% lean meats.
- Check sell-by dates on fresh foods and buy the freshest food possible to reduce waste.

Resources for shopping the perimeter:

www.mypyramid.gov

www.dartmouth.edu/~mascoma/grocery.htm

Choose Whole Foods –Whole foods are foods that are unprocessed and unrefined as much as possible before being consumed. Whole foods do not contain added ingredients, such as sugar, salt, or fat and give you more nutrition for your dollar. Whole foods include fruits and vegetables, unprocessed meat, and non-homogenized milk.

Tips for using whole foods

- Cooking from scratch is better for your health and your budget. When compared to its whole food counterpart, the processed food is often higher in price, sodium, fat, and calories.

For more information on whole foods:

www.mypyramid.gov

<http://www.medicinenet.com/script/main/art.asp?articlekey=62664>

Check the Entire Shelf for Best Prices– Grocery stores often place higher priced items at eye-level. Be sure to look at the shelf from top to bottom to find the best deals.

Tips for shopping the shelves:

- Consider store brands. They are often cheaper while still providing comparable quality.
- Buy in bulk. Buying bulk items that you know you will use before they spoil can help save money.
- Don't buy an item just because it's on sale. Buy foods that are on your list and that are needed.

Don't Shop on an Empty Stomach – If your stomach is growling, you're more likely to buy more food and choose less healthy options.

To learn more about strategic shopping:

www.moneyinstructor.com/art/savegrocery.asp

Budget for your Food – It is important to determine how much money will be available for food each week or month in order to shop wisely.

Tips for budgeting

- Calculate the resources you have to spend on food
- Make a shopping list that fits into your budget for the week
- Buy only the amounts of fresh foods that you can use before they spoil
- Consider frozen fruits and vegetables, look for deals on day-old whole-grain breads, and check the meat counter for manager's specials and the meat mark-down bin.

For more information on budgeting for food:

<http://www.fns.usda.gov/FSP/outreach/pdfs/making-ends-meet.pdf>

Use Coupons – Check newspaper ads and grocery store websites for weekly specials and coupons. Also, sign up for a discount card if you don't already have one.

Tips for using coupons:

- Cut coupons for items that you typically buy.
- Keep coupons in an envelope that is easy to retrieve when you're ready to check out.

For free coupons:

www.couponmom.com

http://www.kingsoopers.com/in_store/Pages/coupon_landing.aspx

<http://www.safeway.com/IFL/Grocery/Coupons>