

Healthy Grocery Shopping

Develop a Grocery Shopping Plan

Healthy grocery shopping starts with a plan that has been developed before you arrive at the store. It is easier to stick to your list when shopping and prevent mid-week stops when you have a complete list for your week. Your plan should include the following elements:

- Ingredients required for planned recipes
- Staple foods for breakfasts, lunches and snacks
- Staple pantry and/or freezer items
- Planned treat foods

Menu Planning Strategies & Tips

In order to develop a grocery list that will work, it is necessary to carve out time and thoughtfully plan what you will prepare for meals in the coming week. Make this a weekly routine so that you can commit to your healthy eating goals. This will also save you time and money while shopping!

Consider these questions when planning your suppers:

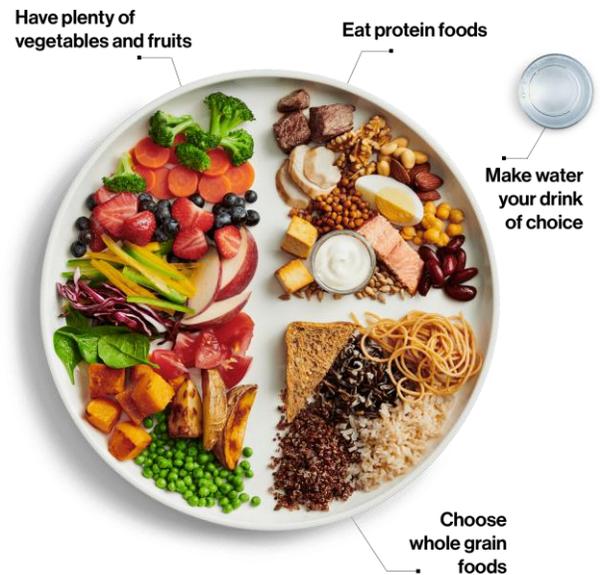
- How many nights will I be at home to prepare supper?
- How much time will I realistically have to prepare supper?
- How many servings will I need, remembering to plan for lunch and supper leftovers?
- Does my meal include a protein source, non-starchy vegetable and whole grain or starchy vegetable?
- Do I have any planned nights out where a supper plan is not required?

Breakfast, lunch and snacks should be simple in nature. Have 2-3 rotational ideas for each, making use of planned extras and leftovers as often as possible.

Label Reading

Take the time to read the nutrition facts table and ingredient list when purchasing a new product. For products that you frequently purchase, take the time at home to become familiar with its nutrient content and decide if it is a product you want to continue purchasing, or if you will plan to replace it for a healthier version once it is finished.

Throughout this resource, you will find tips for how to read the nutrition facts table in context of the foods being compared. It is important to understand what to look at when reading the nutrition facts, as the goals will change from food to food depending on the nutrients they should provide.



Fruits and Vegetables

Fruit and vegetables provide a source of fibre and a wide variety of vitamins, minerals and phytochemicals.

Nutrition fact targets:

- ≤ 140 mg or 5% Daily Value (D.V.) sodium
- ≥ 2 grams or 15% D.V. fibre
- Source of potassium, Vitamin A, and/or Vitamin C

Purchasing tips:

- Choose fresh and frozen most often
- When purchasing canned fruits, look for those that are in water or have no-added-sugar
- When purchasing canned vegetables, look for those that have no-added-sodium
- Choose a wide color variety and consume at least one dark green and orange colored fruit or vegetable on a daily basis
- Juice is now considered an 'other food' due to its low fibre and very high sugar or sodium content; this includes 100% juice, not-from-concentrate, no-added-sugar, and organic varieties.

Fruit and vegetable shopping list:

- All fruits and vegetables are healthy! The most important part of shopping for them is to buy them.
- Choose deeply colored varieties such as berries, peaches, melons, asparagus, tomatoes, broccoli, carrots, beets, bell peppers, and squash
- Choose dark leafy greens such as spinach, kale, bok choy, collard greens and Swiss chard
- Light colored fruits and vegetables also provide many nutrients that are not necessarily on the nutrition facts table; examples include bananas, mushrooms, cauliflower, onions and garlic

Whole Grains

Whole grains provide the body with fibre, protein, many B-Vitamins, iron, zinc, magnesium, and plant compounds called phytonutrients.

Nutrition fact targets:

- ≤ 2 grams or 10% D.V. saturated fat
- ≥ 2 grams or 15% D.V. Fibre
- ≤ 140 mg or 5% D.V. sodium
- 0 grams of trans fat
- ≤ 8 grams sugar per serving (cereals)

Purchasing tips:

- At least half of our grain purchases should be whole grains.
- Look for the word 100% whole grain or sprouted grain in foods that use wheat, wheat berries, spelt, rye, or barley.
- Grains that are naturally 'whole' may not have the word 'whole' in front of them. These include amaranth, buckwheat, bulgur, cornmeal, cracked wheat, kamut, millet, oats or oatmeal, popcorn, quinoa, sorghum, sprouted wheat, teff, triticale and wild or brown rice.
- Grains that are typically **not** whole grains include bran, durum wheat, enriched flour, multigrain, organic flour, pearl barley, semolina, stoneground, wheat, wheat flour, and wheat germ.

Grain shopping list:

- Whole grain bread or buns
- Brown and wild rice
- Bulgar and buckwheat
- Whole grain crackers
- Fresh or frozen corn
- Whole grain English muffins or bagels
- Hot and cold cereals
- Hulled or pot barley
- Whole grain pitas or roti's
- Quinoa, teff and kamut
- Whole grain tortillas or flatbreads
- Wheat or oat bran and wheat germ



Protein Foods

Protein foods are essential for health, providing us with multiple vitamins, minerals, omega 3, and essential amino acids that are necessary for the growth and repair of body tissues and to fight infections. Plant-based protein sources provide more fibre and less saturated fat, both of which are important for heart health.

Nutrition fact targets:

- 0-1 % milk fat (M.F.) for milk and yogurt
- ≤ 20% M.F. for cheese
- ≤ 10% D.V. saturated fat
- 0 grams trans fat
- ≤ 5% D.V. sodium
- No-added-salt canned foods
- ≥ 15% D.V. fibre in beans and lentils
- No sugar added
- Packed in water canned foods

Purchasing tips:

- Include a variety of protein foods in your diet, which include dairy, poultry, fish, meat, nuts, tofu, legumes, split peas, and lentils.
- Include foods that are high in Omega 3 each week. Fish examples include char, salmon, trout, herring, mackerel and herring. Vegetarian Omega 3 sources include ground flaxseed, walnuts and omega-3 enhanced foods like eggs and yogurt.
- Plan at least one vegetarian meal each week that uses tofu, legumes, or lentils as the main protein source.
- Choose no-added-sugar yogurts and those with higher protein amounts like Greek or Icelandic styles.
- Choose raw and dry-roasted, no-added-salt (or sugar) nuts

Protein shopping list:

- Milk (cow or soy)
- Cottage cheese
- Cheese
- Yogurt or Kefir
- Canned or dried beans, lentils, and split peas
- Natural nut butters
- Tofu
- Unsalted nuts
- Eggs
- Fresh, frozen and canned plain fish
- Beef and pork loin and round
- Extra-lean ground meat and poultry
- Skinless poultry
- Wild game

Added Fats



Our body requires fat for a variety of reasons, such as the absorption of some vitamins, hormone production, heart and brain health, and to support cell growth. Current research shows that it is the type of fat consumed over a period of time that has more importance for health, rather than the amount of fat consumed. All fat is high in calorie (9 calories/gram) and should be consumed in small amounts to prevent unwanted weight gain.

Nutrition fact targets:

- ≤ 10% D.V. Saturated fat
- 0 grams Trans Fat
- Non-hydrogenated in the ingredient list
- ≤ 5% D.V. Sodium, No-added-salt, or Low Sodium

Purchasing tips:

- Choose foods that provide healthy mono and poly unsaturated fat sources more often
- Limit purchases of foods that are high in unhealthy saturated fat
- Avoid purchasing foods that contain trans fats; foods that claim they are “Trans Fat Free” are not necessarily healthy
- When choosing nuts and seeds, look for no-added-salt varieties

Added fats shopping list:

- Avocado and guacamole
- Healthy-oil based mayonnaise
- Hummus or black bean dips
- Non-hydrogenated margarine and butter
- Unsalted and Dry-roasted nuts
- Vinaigrette or yogurt based dressings
- Oils: avocado, canola, olive, and peanut
- Olives and olive tapenade
- Seeds: ground flax, chia, hemp, and pumpkin
- Tahini paste
- Tzatziki (*Greek yogurt based*)



Packaged vs. Processed Foods

Packaged foods are not necessarily unhealthy, however it is important to take the time to understand what is in the package to make an informed decision. Highly processed foods on the other hand are not healthy and contain excess sodium, sugars or saturated fat and should be purchased and consumed in moderation. These foods can include juice, pop, chocolate, candies, ice cream and frozen desserts, fast foods, packaged pasta and rice dishes, pizza, baked goods like muffins and donuts, and processed meats like sausages and hot dogs.

Nutrition fact targets:

- ≤ 25-30% of your total calories (for an entrée)
- ≤ 10% D.V. Saturated fat (≤ 15-20% for an entrée)
- 0 grams Trans Fat
- Non-hydrogenated in the ingredient list
- ≥ 15% D.V. Fibre
- < 12 grams sugar (for an entrée)
- ≤ 5% D.V. Sodium, No-added-salt, or Low Sodium (≤20-25% for an entrée)

Purchasing tips:

- Choose packaged 'pre-cooked' whole grains that are unseasoned to speed up cooking times
- Choose pre-cut fruits and vegetables to save time and encourage increased consumption
- Choose pre-portioned yogurt, cheese and portable sized plain milk for a healthy snack on the go
- Be wary of 'health halos' such as organic, multigrain, or plant-based
- Limit seasoned packaged foods that use added sugar, sodium, or fat to boost flavor

Prepared (convenience) food shopping list:

- Fruit trays
- Vegetable trays
- Bagged salads
- Cooked hardboiled eggs
- Portioned yogurt
- Portioned cheese
- Thin crust vegetable pizza
- Hummus & Pretzels
- Plain popcorn

Recipe Websites

For healthy recipe ideas, check out these Dietitian Team favorites!

- Abbeyskitchen.com
- Cookspiration
- Howtoeat.com
- Realgoodeats.ca
- Skinnytaste.com
- Superhealthykids.com
- Themediterraneanandish.com
- Therealfoodrds.com

Internet Resources

For additional credible information on food and nutrition, please visit these websites:

- <https://www.Albertahealthservices.ca/nutrition>
- <https://food-guide.canada.ca/en/>
- <https://www.dietitians.ca/>
- <https://www.unlockfood.ca>