

Smart Shopping

Your healthy diet doesn't start at the dinner table, or even at the stove. It begins at the grocery store.

The Produce Aisle

How to Shop

- Buy color. If you select at least one fruit or vegetable from each hue, you'll cover many nutritional bases with a wide range of disease fighters.
- Look for fruits and vegetables that are grown locally, in season. Produce grown in a far-off locale is harvested before it is fully ripened to withstand being transported. By the time it arrives at your market, nutrients, already diminished because of the shortened ripening period, are even further depleted.
- Avoid anything with bruises, wormholes and soft spots. These indicate that a fruit or vegetable is past its prime or has been poorly handled. However, some marks, such as surface scarring, are a natural effect of tree ripening.

The Dairy Case

How to Shop

- Go for reduced-fat dairy foods instead of nonfat if you're trying to lose weight. The small amount of fat may help ward off cravings. Also, avoid sweetened dairy foods, like fruit-on-the-bottom yogurt, which contain added sugar. Nonfat or reduced-fat dairy products have just as much calcium as whole.
- Try yogurt and hard cheeses in addition to lactose-free products if you're lactose intolerant. Neither has enough lactose to cause trouble for most people. Soy milk is another option, but unfortified kinds are lower in protein and calcium than cow's milk, so be sure to make up for these essentials elsewhere in your diet.
- Pick up some eggs. Although egg substitutes are lower in calories than whole eggs, they may lack these other nutrients. Fortified eggs, such as those with omega-3 fatty acids, offer additional benefits, but they cost more.
- Pass up any dairy containers that leak, which indicates spoilage. And check each egg for hairline cracks, which hasten deterioration.

The Bakery

How to Shop

- For a healthy loaf of bread, check ingredients lists and nutrition-facts labels. Don't rely just on color or product names. Words like multigrain or hearty can be misleading. Look for whole-grain or whole-wheat flour as the first ingredient. Then check for fiber content, which holds essential nutrients.
- Beware of freshly baked loaves. It's difficult to tell if the baker used whole-grain flour. If an ingredients list is provided, read it carefully, and don't be afraid to quiz the salesperson. As a last resort, buy a loaf that contains nuts and seeds for the added nutritional benefit.

The Meat Case and Deli

How to Shop

- Watch out for white marbling; while it means that the cut is more tender, it also signals higher fat and more calories. The leanest cuts of pork and beef have the words loin or round in their names. But be aware that because of their lower fat content, they'll dry out quickly with intense, prolonged heat. Stir-fry or broil, and use a marinade.
- Pass up skinless poultry cuts; they offer less fat but are more expensive. The skin keeps meat moist during cooking (just remove it before you eat to save on fat and calories). Boneless cuts, also pricey, aren't as flavorful as those cooked with the bone attached.
- Look for reduced-fat, low-sodium luncheon meats at the deli. They often taste just as good as full-fat meats. The type of preparation used - roasting, broiling, baking or smoking - has little effect on calorie and fat content, unless sweet glazes such as honey or maple syrup are used.
- Take only tightly wrapped packages that show no signs of leakage, marked with a sell-by date later than the current date. This applies to all meats, including those in the butcher case and deli.

The Frozen Foods Section

How to Shop

- Stock up on fruits and vegetables, especially if you live in an area where locally grown items are hard to get. Frozen produce is often just as nutritious as fresh, because it's picked when it's fully ripe and processed immediately.
- Double-check sodium and other nutrient counts. Choose frozen entrées with less than 800 milligrams of sodium per serving. Also, look for a balance of lean protein (chicken, seafood, soy) and carbohydrates, plus at least one serving (preferably two) of vegetables.

**DID YOU KNOW YOUR EAP, ULLIANCE, OFFERS
LEGAL & FINANCIAL ADVICE?**

*Life can be hard. Talking is easy.
Contact us; we're here to help! -*

800.448.8326

Ulliance

