

HEALTHY MEAL PREP

habits of a healthy shopper



Good nutrition starts with smart choices in the grocery store. Cooking up healthy meals is a challenge if you don't have the right ingredients in your kitchen. But grocery shopping can be a daunting task with so many choices. How can you ensure you're filling your cart with the good stuff?

Plan Ahead

Healthy eating starts even before you get to the store. A grocery list will help you stay focused as you shop and avoid impulse-buying items you don't need. Keep a running list and add to it throughout the week. If you plan meals in advance, review your menu and add ingredients you don't have on hand. Be sure to check your pantry to see what needs to be restocked.

Shop Intentionally

Being aware of marketing can help you make healthier choices in-store. Things like free samples, promotional items, product placement, and colourful packaging can affect your purchases. So, be mindful of what you are picking up and if it's not a familiar product, take the time to review the ingredients and nutrition facts.

Shop the Perimeter

The perimeter of the store is where you'll find fresh foods like fruits, vegetables, whole grains, dairy, meat, and fish. Spend most of your time in the produce section and choose a rainbow of fruits and vegetables. Then head to the centre aisles for healthy staples like frozen produce, canned goods, oatmeal, and pasta. It's ok to add some treats to the cart, but keep them to a minimum.

Choose "real" Foods

You want to choose items with as little processing and as few additives as possible. Look for no salt or low-sodium options. Choose proteins that haven't been injected with fats or broths. When buying grains and bread products, a whole grain should be the first ingredient instead of enriched flour.

Read the Labels

Take the time to read nutrition facts – even for foods you believe to be healthy. Nutrient content can vary a lot, so compare similar products if you can. Foods that contain more than five ingredients, artificial ingredients, or ingredients you can't pronounce may not be healthy choices.

Consider Convenience

Sometimes convenience is worth the extra cost. For example, single-serve packages of nuts and cheese or pre-cut fruit or veggies can be helpful for portion control and packing healthy lunches and on-the-go snacks.

Start with a Snack

Don't shop on an empty stomach since hunger can lead to impulsive purchases. Eating a healthy snack before you shop may also help you shop healthier. According to one study, shoppers who ate an apple beforehand bought 28% more fruits and vegetables than those who ate a cookie and 25% more than those who shopped on an empty stomach.

Divvy Up Your Grocery Cart

The contents of your shopping cart should mirror the portions of the ideal dinner plate!



Sources: food52.com/blog/20254-grocery-shopping-how-to-shop-healthier | webmd.com/food-recipes/features/10-tips-for-healthy-grocery-shopping | heart.org/en/healthy-living/healthy-eating/cooking-skills/shopping/grocery-shopping-tips | Images by Unsplash