

Healthy Shopping Made Easy

When you go to the supermarket, do you feel overwhelmed by the number of choices? If so, you are not alone. In today's supermarket there are over 60,000 items to choose from. How do you balance taste, price, nutrition, food safety and convenience?

Here are some tips you might find helpful when shopping for food:

Plan ahead...

- Check to see what food you have at home before shopping.
- Check flyers for sales and discounts.
- Plan a menu for the week. For each day, make sure to have foods from all the four food groups in **Canada's Food Guide**.
- Make a **shopping list** based on your menu. Avoid buying items not on the list. This will save time and money by keeping you from buying food you don't need.
- **Eat before shopping.** People tend to buy items they do not need when they are hungry.

In the store...

- When shopping, buy most of your food from the outer aisles of the store. This is where you will usually find fresh unprocessed food. Processed and packaged foods are usually in the centre aisles.
- Look on the **top and bottom shelves** – the most expensive foods are often at eye-level on the shelves.



Make healthy choices...

- Buy items that are **lower in saturated and trans fat, lower in sugar and salt** (sodium) and **higher in fibre, vitamins and minerals**. Check the Nutrition Facts table to compare food items. (See "Reading the Nutrition Facts table")
- Choose **whole grain** products (e.g., brown rice, whole wheat pastas, whole grain breads and cereals, whole grain wheat, whole grain oats, bulgur, pot barley).
- Choose fresh vegetables and fruit. Frozen vegetables and fruit are also healthy choices and cost less when they are not in season.
- Choose **lower fat milk products** (skim, 1% or 2% milk, and cheese that

is less than 20% M.F.)

(Note: children under two years of age should have homogenized milk)

- **Tofu and legumes such as beans, dried peas, and lentils** are healthy choices. They have less fat than meat. Legumes are also sources of folate and fibre.
- Choose **unprocessed** foods more often. For example, buy fresh or plain frozen meat, fish and poultry instead of products that have been prepared with breading, rich sauces and crusts.

Keep food safety in mind...

When buying...

- Pick up vegetables, fruit, bread, canned food and dry foods first. Then get cold and frozen foods just before you pay for your items.
- Check the **Best before date** and choose the latest date.
- Do not buy dented, rusty or bulging cans. The food in these cans may no longer be safe.
- Do not leave foods such as meat, poultry, fish and eggs at room temperature; refrigerate these foods as soon as possible after shopping.

At home...

- Keep fresh food in the refrigerator. Freeze fresh meat, poultry and fish as soon as you get home if you will not use it within two days.
- Store dry food in sealed containers.
- Use up food items that were bought first as soon as possible. It may help to label cans and dry foods with the date of purchase.
- After opening or cooking dried and canned foods, put any leftovers in the fridge and use within two to three days. Do not store food in the original can once it has been opened.
- Store food and cleaning supplies separately and make sure all products are properly labelled.

Where to store food...

- **Cupboards:** breads, cereals, canned foods, dry foods, herbs and spices, peanut butter, unopened condiments (e.g. jam), potatoes, onions.
- **Refrigerator:** milk, yogurt, cheese, eggs, meat, poultry, fish, butter, margarine, opened condiments (e.g. jam), food leftovers and most vegetables and fruit.
- **Freezer:** meat, poultry and fish to be kept for more than two days, frozen foods, bread and milk for long-term use.

Reading the Nutrition Facts Table

Nutrition Facts tables can help you make healthy choices when buying food. The Nutrition Facts table is found on most packaged foods. You will not find Nutrition Facts tables on fresh vegetables and fruit, raw meat, poultry, fish and seafood, foods prepared on site in a store (e.g., bakery items), products with small amounts of nutrients (e.g., coffee beans, tea leaves), alcohol, and foods sold at places like farmers' markets.



The Nutrition Facts Table tells you the number of calories and amount of 13 nutrients for the serving size shown. More nutrients may be listed on some labels.

In the example below, there are **130 calories per 1/2 bag** of the food product. The amount of each nutrient is in grams. For example, there are **5 grams of fibre in a serving (1/2 bag)** of the food product.

The % Daily Value on the label tells you if a food has a lot or a little of a nutrient. Your nutrient needs may be higher or lower than the daily value. Whether or not you know your nutrient needs, you

can use the % Daily Value to compare food items.

Buy foods that are lower in saturated and trans fat, lower in sugar and salt (sodium). Choose foods that are higher in fibre, vitamins and minerals.

Nutrition Facts	
Per 1/2 bag (40 g)	
Amount	% Daily Value
Calories 130	
Fat 2 g	3 %
Saturates 0.5g	3 %
+ Trans 0g	
Cholesterol 0 mg	
Sodium 230 mg	10 %
Carbohydrate 24 g	8 %
Fibre 5g	24 %
Sugars 0g	
Protein 3g	
Vitamin A 0 %	Vitamin C 0 %
Calcium 0 %	Iron 6 %

For more information about reading nutrition labels, see:

- http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/label-etiquet/index_e.html
- <http://www.healthyeatinginstore.ca>