

Nutrition and Grocery Shopping

Washington Elementary School District EBT



Grocery shopping may not be everyone's cup of tea. In fact, some people may just want to get in, grab food and get out. This can lead to poor food choices, such as highly processed foods or foods lacking the right nutrients. But by making thoughtful choices at the grocery store, you're taking the first step toward healthier living. Filling your cart with the right foods will provide you with the energy and nutrition you need to get through your week.

Start with a plan

You wouldn't start building a house without a plan. So why build your diet without one either? You have to know what you need in order to be successful.

When it comes to grocery shopping, you can start by scanning your pantry, cupboards and fridge to see what you need. Plan a few recipes for the week and make a list of the ingredients you'll need. Try adding a dry-erase board to your kitchen or keeping an ongoing list on your smart phone so you can add items as you go along.

You can get your family involved too. Post a list on the fridge so that family members can add their ideas to it.

Think about your plate

Before you head to the store, think about filling your plate with the essentials. Vegetables, whole grains and lean protein options make perfect meals, and fruits the ideal dessert option.

Vegetables should make up half of your plate. Buy colorful options so you don't grow tired of the having the same thing every day. Dark-green veggies are especially high in fiber, vitamin C and iron, and act as antioxidants in your body.

Try low-fat dairy options as well. Skim and one percent milk have the same amount of calcium as whole milk, without the fat and calories. Calcium-enriched soy products are also healthier choices when it comes to dairy.

For items like cereal, bread, rice and pasta, choose 100 percent whole grain. Make sure to read the ingredients to find whole-grain foods.

While you're in the store

Here are some things to keep in mind while you're shopping:

- ✦ **Remember the basics.** Make sure to fill your cart with foods that provide essential nutrients. These include produce, dairy products and meat.
- ✦ **Don't stray from your list.** If you prepare a list before you go and stick to it while you're in the store, you're less likely to be tempted by impulse purchases.
- ✦ **Avoid fortified foods.** These are typically unhealthy foods that have nutrients added in processing. Try to choose natural foods that don't require nutritional benefit labels.
- ✦ **Read the ingredients.** The first ingredient listed is usually what the item contains the most of. Try to avoid products with long lists of ingredients or ones you can't pronounce.

Shopping at the grocery store is a chance for you to work on a healthy lifestyle. By making thoughtful food choices, you're on your way to better well-being.

Quick tips

- ✦ Wear comfortable walking shoes when you go shopping.
- ✦ Try not to grocery shop when you're hungry. You might be surprised at what you've picked up by the time you get home!
- ✦ Avoid grocery shopping during busy times, like weekend afternoons.
- ✦ Look for deals by scanning ads and downloading coupon apps to your smart phone.

This flyer is solely for informational purposes and is not intended to provide medical advice. You should consult your healthcare provider with any questions you have about your health and/or medical treatment.

