Tips for Healthy Grocery Shopping

Eating right starts with a successful trip to the grocery store. If you do not have the right ingredients for a healthy meal, or buy too much junk food, eating healthy can be tough. With a few easy strategies, however, you can change your grocery shopping for the better.

**Plan Meals and a Shopping List**

Before you even set foot in the grocery store, plan out the meals you want to make for the week and base your shopping list on this meal plan. Search for coupons and sale items that match up with your list to save some money.

When planning your meals and shopping list, use the My Pyramid guide to ensure that you have a good mix of food groups. In general, focus on buying mainly fruits, vegetables, dairy, whole grains, lean meat and fish, nuts, and beans. Make sure you mix up the groceries you buy every week to give yourself some variety. An easy way to do this is to try one new fruit or vegetable every week.

**Make the Right Choices in Each Section of the Grocery Store**

Once you get to the grocery store, it’s important to know how to navigate each section of the store to make the healthiest choices. While in the produce section, select a variety of fruits and vegetables in every color of the rainbow. When shopping for breads, cereal and other grains, look for the least processed selections that are made using whole grains.

If you are shopping in the meat section, choose fish, lean cuts of meat or skinless poultry for the healthiest options. While shopping for dairy items, opt for low-fat or non-fat options that give you both calcium and Vitamin D. Some good choices in the frozen foods section are frozen fruits and vegetables, whole grain waffles, and juices made from 100 percent fruit.

**Simple Rules for Quick and Easy Shopping**

To accomplish healthy grocery shopping in the quickest way, follow these easy rules:

Stay on the perimeter of the store where the freshest food is kept, and stay away from the center of the store where the junk food is located

Try not to buy foods with more than 5 ingredients listed

Select "real" foods that have 100 percent fruit juice or whole grain

Eating healthier is a tough habit to form, but by making the right choices at the grocery store, both before and during shopping, can make it a little bit easier.