

10 Healthy Shopping Tips

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As you walk through the grocery store aisles, stick mainly to the perimeter and your shopping list, and consider some of these foods to increase nutrients and to fuel your body.

Mary's Recommended Food Super Stars for your Essentials to Wellness

1. Grocery Shopping - Hitting Up the Produce Section

I like to shop 2 days a week. Calculate how many meals and snacks you are going to eat at home in the next 3-4 days. Pick a number of healthy fruits and vegetables to eat at these meals and snacks. This plan works for doing the majority of your shopping twice each week. Write down some meal ideas and take them to the store with you.

Look for seasonal, organic and colorful fruits and vegetables to form the basis of your meals and snacks.

Start with Fruit

Choose from the variety of apples, unsweetened applesauce, oranges, grapes, grapefruit, berries in a variety of colors, lemons, limes, bananas, plums, peaches, pears, kiwifruit, melons, tomatoes, avocados, fruit salsas and frozen berries. Frozen fruit can often be a good budget choice. Buy organic when you can. Check out the Clean 15 and Dirty Dozen to see which I always buy organic.

Aim for 3 servings of colorful fruits each day. Fruit provides healthy carbohydrates for energy and a load of plant-based phytonutrients and fiber.

Then Vegetables

Next, let's do the same with vegetables, only buy more of them! The salad bar can be your friend.

Buy enough for 5-6 servings of vegetables each day. Include crunchy and leafy, and don't forget the herbs. A quick serving size reference is a cup of leafy or 1/2 cup of crunchy vegetables.

We typically come up short on essential nutrients and fiber when we don't eat enough fruits and vegetables. Your great health begins here. You also benefit from healthy carbohydrates for energy. If you get produce in a variety of colors, you are getting phytonutrients that we are just beginning to understand. We cannot isolate the nutrients from fruits and vegetables and rely on supplemented vitamins. Get most of your nutrients from a variety of plant foods.

Choose from green beans, lettuce varieties, carrots, cucumbers, snap peas, garlic, onion, jicama, celery, broccoli, cauliflower, Brussels sprouts, squash, parsley, sweet potato, potato, basil, kale, turnips, parsnips, radishes, eggplant, sauerkraut, kimchi, and frozen vegetables. Frozen vegetables can also be a healthy budget choice. Buy organic when you can. Check out the clean 15 and Dirty Dozen to see what I always buy organic.

Buy a vegetable that you don't try very often and steam it ... like an artichoke. Or roast root vegetables. Eat jicama sticks as a snack. Vegetables feed your good gut microbes, the ones that support your great health.

Think about the root vegetables and squashes when it comes to complex carbohydrates for fuel. They add plant based-nutrient density to your diet and you feel satisfied after eating them. I like to add a healthy fat, such as olive oil to help absorb the fat soluble vitamins.

Add in a mushroom super star, from the family of fungi.

2. Don't Forget the Farmer's Markets

It's important that we support those that bring us local food. Some of the best food we can get our hands on is that which is grown a short distance from each of us. We need to support the farmers and ranchers since they bring us the freshest, local foods. I like grains to be organic to avoid pesticides. Use brown rice, white rice, millet, quinoa and oats. If you tolerate the gluten grains, choose whole grain wheat, spelt, rye and barley. If your store has bulk bins and rapid turnover, get grains here. Look for a brand such as Bob's Red Mill. Learn to cook grains the proper way, by soaking them prior to cooking them. Cook up and add nuts, seeds and leafy greens. Add pinto beans, black beans, white beans, garbanzo beans. Add a healthy fat such as olive oil. Add some dried unsweetened cranberries. Add a handful of walnuts or sunflower seeds. Squeeze on lime juice. Sprinkle on sea salt and pepper, dried or fresh herbs and spices. Give yourself a hand for creating a delicious healthy meal! This bowl meal will also provide you with healthy carbohydrates for energy.

4. Protein

Yes, we need healthy protein. It is a personal choice if you choose to eat animal protein. All plant food contains protein, it just varies in the amount of protein and the type of amino acids. You need a couple of palm size servings of animal protein or 3 servings of plant protein (greens, grains, nuts, and seeds in combination) each day to make sure you can build your structure, repair structure damage and turnover, build muscle, build hormones and neurotransmitters. If you work out and exercise heavily, you need more. You want to

get the protein level in your diet to be ideal *for you*. ***Too little and you can't build your structure or replace hormones. Too much and it's taxing on your kidneys.*** We don't store excess protein, so you need it every day.

If you eat animal protein, make sure it is the best quality that you can afford. Is it grass fed? Is it raised in a healthy and sustainable environment? Is it free of hormones and antibiotics? Is it wild caught? Is it free range and fed an organic and proper diet? For example, feedlot cows are most often not fed a normal diet; corn is not a normal food for cows to eat. It creates meat that is more inflammatory. Grass and grazing is the normal way to feed cattle! So make sure you know how your animal is raised. Buy the whole chicken and get a few meals, including the bone broth when you make a soup. Be aware of the animal protein you choose for the welfare of the animal and the planet.

Look for sustainable seafood sources by reviewing the Monterey Bay Seafood Watch List.

If you eat dairy products, support the organic and grass fed animal brands. Dairy can be an excellent source of protein. Get it grass fed if you are able and organically sourced. I like kefir, plain yogurts and cheeses.

Buy organic, pastured, humanely raised eggs.

5. Nuts and Seeds and Oils

Get a few of these healthy fat sources each day. I typically buy organic to avoid pesticides, but I don't get crazy if the store doesn't carry organic. Do your best and get the nuts and seeds you can afford. If the nuts have been sprayed, common in almond growing for example, your liver will have to work extra to get rid of the pesticides. A healthy liver, along with the proper nutrients, will get rid of the pesticide.

I like raw nuts and seeds when possible. These are wonderful sources of protein. Grab a bag of organic walnuts one week and get organic sunflower seeds the next time. Store a few jars of seeds and nuts in the refrigerator for snacks, salad toppers or soup additions in place of croutons. Buy good quality nut butter or peanut butter without added sugar. I encourage you to do the best you can with the foods that are in your communities.

I like organic olive oil, organic canola oil, organic coconut oil and organic avocado oil. I also like grass fed butter. Healthy fats and healthy oils are needed for a healthy you. Your brain is 60% fat, every cell in your body contains a semi-permeable lipid membrane and you need fat to efficiently run your brilliant hormonal system. These are just a few reasons to eat healthy fats daily. Fat is also an excellent and nutrient dense fuel source.

6. Beverages

You don't need to spend a lot of money on beverages. Choose spring water or buy a good quality water filter. Pick up organic green tea or coffee, herbal tea packets, a kombucha or

two. I like plain water best, but you can buy Pellegrino or Perrier and give it a splash of lemon or tart organic cherry juice. As far as sodas, soft drinks, sports drinks and fruit blend juices with a lot of apple juice concentrate go? You don't need them. You won't find them in my cart very often. I drink water, tea and enjoy a few cups of French-press coffee each week. And regarding alcohol, I choose an occasional glass of wine.

7. Herbs and Spices

You are missing out on nutrient density if you don't use herbs and spices on a daily basis. Salt and pepper are only the beginning of seasoning potential. Stock up your spice and herb jars and use them. Buy organic. Did you know that cinnamon is an incredible blood sugar stabilizer because it contains chromium? Use it on oatmeal, sprinkled on with organic cocoa powder and a spoonful of maple syrup. Now you have increased the nutrient density of your oatmeal. Add fresh herbs to meals too! Chop up parsley and throw it in soup. Add curry to a stir-fry and get the benefits of yellow turmeric. Learning to use herbs and spices will become habit. Look in the spice drawer and get creative with your meals.

8. Save Raw Vegetable Ends to Make Rich Broths

Keep a container in the freezer with onion peels, carrot and celery ends, garlic pieces, zucchini ends, leftover parsley stems, etc. When the container is full, simmer them in a pot of water to extract nutrients for your own rich broth for soup or stir-fry. This gives you more nutrient density and it's better than ditching the remains in your trash. This also saves you money on buying cartons of broth.

9. Buy Less in the Processed Food Sections

I am not a purist when it comes to complete avoidance of packaged products. I don't buy many package foods, but when I do I choose those with just a few ingredients, 1-2 or preferably under 5 on the label. I choose a variety of hummus dips and salsas, a delicious, organic jam or spread, a few canned or boxed products such as organic crushed tomatoes and organic beans. I make a nutrient dense pasta dish about once a month. I choose a recipe that includes vegetables. I keep simple whole grain crackers in the pantry. I purchase organic tortilla chips. I choose trail mix that I create from the bulk bins over bars to avoid added sugar and the additional processing. I like to have frozen berries on hand for smoothies and frozen vegetables, like spinach, to make quiches.

Become a label reader. There are many chemicals and additives in our food supply. What goes in to your body must be used or detoxified out. Take the pressure off your biochemistry and avoid ingredients that are not food. Somewhere over the last few decades we became immune to chemical and additive words on our food labels.

10. Avoid the Most Common Genetically Modified (GMO) Foods

I don't know if I feel as strongly about anything in the healthy journey as I do about GMO corn, soy and cottonseed oil. High percentages of the United States corn, soy and cottonseed

products are genetically modified. So to this end, my recommendation is to avoid corn chips and other corn products that do not specifically state that they are organic and verified on the label as non-GMO verified. Ask at your favorite restaurants if their corn tortillas are organic. They are likely not, but as we begin to ask, we can elicit change. The same goes for soy products and those with soy ingredients and cottonseed oil that are found in processed foods. Salad dressings often contain genetically modified soy oils. BE A LABEL READER.

11. Make changes at your pace

I did not put this list together to make anyone feel bad or overwhelmed. Start with what is easy for you to change. Start with the low hanging fruit. Begin with your beverage choices. Add more vegetables to your meals. Drizzle cold-pressed organic olive oil on the vegetables after you cook them. Consider changing out your GMO corn chips to non-GMO verified organic corn chips. Make the changes that feel good to you, the changes that will stick for you. Every person will have a different starting point. That's how you will make real and sustainable progress in your personal health journey.

Looking forward to sharing health tips with you!

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