



Healthy Shopping Guide

During the pandemic, you may be following advice to prepare your food stockpile. Stocking up on groceries essentials doesn't mean you have to compromise healthy habits. Use the following steps to help you plan healthy food essentials for optimal nutrition.

1) Keep an Inventory

Take a look at what you have at home. Notice expiration dates and use what you have first to prevent food waste from expiration. *Buy only what you need.*

2) Plan Meals

A little planning goes a long way. It may seem like a daunting task, but if you aren't the type to think of a meal on the spot, it could be an essential step. Try and plan out your meals for two weeks to save yourself from multiple grocery trips.

Save Time When Meal Planning

- Create a 1-2 week meal rotation where you cycle the same meals
- Involve the family with each member suggesting their favorite meals.
- Plan themed dinner nights for each day of the week. For example, Meatless Monday, Taco Tuesday, Italian Wednesday, Salad Thursday, Fish Friday, Stir-Fry Saturday, and Roast Sunday.

3) Buy Local

Shelves may be bare at the grocery stores, but local farmers fields are full. Buying local food not only supports community farmers but benefits you too. Often local produce is fresher, is at peak nutritional value, and doesn't have to travel many miles to get to your door, meaning less of a need for preservatives and pesticides.

How to find local food?

- [Click here](#) to find a farm near you. Local farms may be offering a pick-up option or even delivery for goods.
- Check with a local CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) program to see if they are offering shares for Spring or Summer.

4) Include Fresh, Frozen, and Nonperishable Items

Create a mix of items from all categories, fresh, frozen, and nonperishables. Eat your fresh items first to prevent food waste. Freeze any leftovers if they freeze well. Move onto frozen items and nonperishables next to prevent multiple grocery trips.

Create a Healthy Pantry

A well-stocked pantry is essential for healthy, flavorful meals that you can put together at your convenience. Often pantry staples include added ingredients to increase shelf life, so it's necessary to notice your selections. Follow these tips for the healthiest pantry stock.

- **Canned Fruit**- Choose canned fruit packed in its own juice or packed in water to decrease the amount of added sugar.
- **Dried Fruit**- Dried fruits may have added sugar, excess sodium, or sulfites in addition to seasonings. Check the label to know what you're buying. Keep in mind that serving sizes are smaller for dried fruits because they are more concentrated.
- **Canned Vegetables**- Choose canned vegetables labeled low-sodium, reduced-sodium, or no added salt. Canned vegetables can also be rinsed in water to decrease sodium content.
- **Whole Grains**- Intact whole grains like brown rice or barley can last up to 6 months in the pantry, and one year in the freezer.
- **Proteins**- Nuts, beans, seeds, and lentils are all great sources of protein that have a long shelf life. When buying canned beans, the only ingredient you want is the bean itself. For nut butter, try to get the least amount of ingredients as possible.

Create a Healthy Freezer

Frozen foods are a great option when in need of a healthy food stock because freezing food delays spoiling from microorganisms. A lot of products freeze well without added preservatives. Fruits and vegetables are usually frozen at peak harvest to prevent loss of nutrients. Follow these tips when selecting frozen products.

- **Vegetables**- Many vegetables with sauces and seasoning contain excess sodium. Look for plain frozen vegetables.
- **Fruits**- Choose 100% frozen without added sugar.
- **Grains**- Choose whole grains. As with vegetables, try to find options without added ingredients.
- **Meat and Poultry**- Choose fresh and frozen meat rather than processed meat. Choose poultry that hasn't been injected with "broth," "saline," or a "sodium solution."
- **Healthy Frozen Entrée Guidelines**
 - No more than ¼ of your days calorie intake ~400-600 calories
 - No more than 6 grams of Saturated fat
 - At least 3 grams of fiber
 - Less than 700 mg of sodium

5) Prepare Meals

Enjoy having some time to prepare meals on your own or involving the family, whichever you prefer. Stick to what you are comfortable making, or step up your meal game and experiment. You may surprise yourself. Eat well, live well, be well.

Resources:

<https://www.berkeleywellness.com/healthy-eating/food/article/how-buy-frozen-entrées>

<https://www.choosemyplate.gov/coronavirus>

<https://www.heart.org/en/healthy-living/healthy-eating/add-color/fresh-frozen-or-canned-fruits-and-vegetables-all-can-be-healthy-choices>