Grocery Store Checklist

Follow this checklist while shopping at the grocery store to help you make healthy choices. This list provides helpful hints and tips to consider while shopping in each aisle of the grocery store.

☐ Fresh Produce

- **Eat the rainbow**
  A colorful plate provides many antioxidants, vitamins, and minerals. Focus on filling ½ of your plate at meals with fruits and vegetables.
- **Buy in season**
  Purchasing fruits and vegetables in season may be more budget friendly, have less impact on the environment, and be less expensive.

☐ Canned Foods

- **Read labels for sugar content**
  Many canned fruits may be packed in heavy syrup, which is added sugar. Fruit contains natural sugars. Find canned fruits packed in 100% fruit juice or water to avoid added sugars.
- **Read labels for sodium content**
  Many canned vegetables and soup contain sodium. Salt may be added to these products to improve flavor, texture, taste, and appearance. To find a low sodium product look for items containing 140mg sodium of less per serving.

☐ Frozen Foods

- **Fruits and vegetables**
  Choosing frozen fruits and vegetables can be a great option as they are picked at peak ripeness, allowing the nutritional value to remain intact. There may be a wider variety available to find options you enjoy. This may also assist you in reducing food waste as they will not spoil like fresh options do.
- **Frozen entrees**
  Frozen entrees can be helpful when you need a quick meal. However, these meals can be packed with sodium as a preservative. It is important to read labels for sodium. Look for meals around 600mg sodium per meal. Also be sure to select meals that contain a protein source and vegetables.

☐ Cereal and Bread

- **Consider fiber**

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- Fiber is an important part of a healthy diet to aid digestion, help you feel full, and may assist in managing cholesterol levels. It is good to look for food with more than 5 grams of fiber per serving which is considered a high fiber food.
- **Look for whole grains**
  Aim to make half the grains in your day whole grains. Read ingredient lists for the first word to be "whole". This will help to limit enriched or processed grains in your diet.

☐ Meat and Protein

- **Look for lean cuts**
  Choose cuts of meat with the least amount of white marbling as this is fat. Read packaging for options listed as "choice" or "select". Poultry tends to be a great lean option, however, be sure to choose cuts without the skin or remove it prior to cooking. When selecting ground beef choose 90% or more lean. Also trial swapping for ground turkey or chicken.
- **Deli meat**
  Lunch meat tends to be higher in sodium. Remember to look for options labeled as low sodium or 140mg sodium per serving. Be mindful of serving size when eating deli meat. A serving is about 2-3 ounces (or approximately 3-4 slices)
- **Protein on a budget**
  For budget friendly protein sources consider beans, lentils, edamame, canned tuna, eggs, peanut butter, cottage cheese.

☐ Dairy

- **Read labels for % daily values of calcium**
  Dairy is a great source of calcium. It is beneficial to reach 1,000mg calcium per day. Most nutrition labels provide % daily values for calcium. Each nutrition label is based on a 2000 calorie diet. To reach 1,000mg calcium per day your % daily value each day should add up to 100%.

☐ Fats

- **Saturated fats**
  Saturated fats are typically solid at room temperature. They may impact cholesterol levels and overall heart health. A few examples are butter, coconut oil, beef, pork, full fat dairy, palm oil, baked and fried foods. The American Heart Association recommends less than 6% total calories from saturated fat. It can be helpful to choose products that have 3 grams of fat or less per serving.

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- **Unsaturated fats**
  Unsaturated fats are liquid at room temperature. There are two types of unsaturated fats, monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats. These fats may improve cholesterol and decrease inflammation. A few examples are olive oil, avocados, canola oil, fatty fish (salmon, tuna, mackerel, herring, trout, sardines).

- **Be cautious of tricky wording**
  Look for claims on food labels. A product that is labeled as “low” fat means it has less than 3 grams of fat per serving. A product that is labeled as “reduced” fat means it has at least 25% less fat per serving than the original product. Use caution as the original product may be a very high fat food so this may still have a high fat amount.