

## How to Be a Savvy Grocery Shopper

As I strolled down the grocery store aisles today, I really didn't know what I needed. My eyes glazed over as I stared at an entire wall of bread, trying to choose just one loaf. By the time I reached the till, I looked at my purchases laid out before me, and realized that I still had no idea what I would cook next week. I had broken cardinal rule number one of grocery shopping: Plan the meals first.

Grocery stores offer so much choice that sometimes we don't see the forest through the trees, or the meals through the foods, so to speak. We find ourselves wondering, 'what did I come in for again?' Unfortunately, when we shop for odds and ends, that's just what we will end up with. Does "*there is nothing good to eat*", ring a resounding bell in your house? Or, do you scramble to figure out what to cook for dinner every evening?

Scramble no longer! With a little advance planning, grocery shopping can take the stress out of preparing your meals. Think meals – not food. Plan your meals – make your list, then buy your groceries. Think of a few dinner ideas and pick up the basics for lunches and snacks. The benefit? No more 6pm stares at your cupboards.

Try these simple steps to push your grocery cart with more direction:

- Write a grocery list for breakfast, lunch, dinner and snacks - and stick to it!
- Eat before you go to the store. Shopping on an empty stomach is like going to the pet store "just to look" at the cute puppies. You never know what you will come home with.
- Walk the perimeter of the store first. You will pass by the four food groups: the bakery, produce, meat and dairy sections for your basic essentials.
- Read the aisle signs. Do you need to go there? If so, leave your cart at the end of the aisle, so you don't grab too much.
- Leave the kids at home - our carts look very different when they come along. Have you noticed how all sweets are carefully placed within their reach?
- Avoid the cookie, candy and chip aisles. Just don't go! Look straight ahead, pick up your pace, you'll be empowered!
- Look high and low on the shelves. High-profit foods are at eye level, you will often find cheaper and healthier options on the top and bottom shelves of the aisles.
- Stock up on healthy snacks - red peppers and snow peas taste great and are full of vitamins. Granola bars are full of sugar!
- Read labels. Look for foods that are high in fibre, low in sugar and fat and moderate in Calories and protein.

- Count 2 fruits and 2 veggies for every day of the week. Frozen fruits and veggies are healthy options too.
- Try one new food every week.
- Prepare for disaster days! Choose a healthy frozen meal that can be used in a pinch.

It is both an art and science to grocery shop with the right balance of creative meal planning, budgeting, nutrition and label reading. With a little advance planning, you can shop smart and stock up on the foods that will make meal time a breeze.

Eating right can be easy! Cristina Sutter is a Registered Dietitian with a Masters degree in Nutrition. She is available for personal or group nutrition counseling (served with personality!). Reach her today at Satori Integrative Health Centre by calling 604.274.7224 or by email at [cristina.sutter@gmail.com](mailto:cristina.sutter@gmail.com). For more information, visit [www.satoriintegrativehealth.com](http://www.satoriintegrativehealth.com).