



# Navigating the Grocery Store



What are the best ways to navigate and make healthy choices in the grocery store that will help you better manage your weight? Here are some helpful tips to make food shopping easier and healthier!

### General Food Shopping Tips:

Eat before you shop.

Bring a list.

Stay in the perimeter of the grocery store.

[Read labels!](#)



### Food Labels 101

When you get to the grocery store, the information on labels can be overwhelming. Here are the three most important things to know:

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#### 1. Serving sizes are not uniform, nor are they always realistic.

At the top of the Nutrition Facts panel, check the serving size and decide if that's how much you would typically consume in a sitting. Sometimes, this is easy - it may say 4 crackers or 5 pieces. Other times, it requires measuring cups or a scale. If you find that you typically eat two "servings" of something, double the calories, fat and carbohydrates, too.



**2. Look at the total number of carbohydrates per serving and deduct the number of grams of fiber, if it's over 5.** For example, if a food has 23 grams of carbs in a serving and 6 grams of fiber, consider the "countable" carbs to be 17. Guidelines say you should consume at least 25 to 35 grams of fiber per day (the average American gets about half that). Not only does fiber not raise blood glucose, it helps slow the absorption of other carbs.

**3. Under "Total Fat," look at trans fat.** The acceptable limit for trans fat — which is found in crackers, baked goods, margarines and other common foods — is 0, so you might need to watch out for trans fat, rather than saturated fat.

#### The Fine Print

The ingredients list is, in many ways, your best source of information. Contents are listed in descending order by weight, so the first two ingredients are usually the most important. If the first ingredient is sugar (especially high fructose corn syrup) or enriched wheat flour (a.k.a., white flour), consider putting the package back on the shelf. Look for the word whole in front of grains (whole wheat, whole oats, etc.), and for heart-healthy oils such as olive, canola, and peanut oils.

#### The Sweet Stuff.

The grams of sugar listed include naturally occurring sugars, such as those in milk products, fruits, and vegetables. So check the ingredients list. All of the following are different terms for added sugar: brown sugar, molasses, beet sugar, honey, cane juice, turbinado, maple syrup, corn syrup, dextrose, fructose, maltose, barley malt, and fruit juice concentrate. Sugar alcohols, such as maltitol, xylitol, and sorbitol can also have an impact on blood glucose levels. Again, check the ingredients and total carbohydrate count.

#### Tricky Label Terms

Low fat, reduced sugar, low carb — what does it all really mean? If a product label says "low fat," it has 3 grams or less per serving. If it says sugar or fat "free," it means it contains less than .5 gram per serving. If it's "reduced" (fat, sugar, or sodium), it contains at least 25 percent less per serving than the regular version of that food.

Is there a health topic you want to know more about? For more information about fitness, education and nutrition, or other health programs, contact Grace Keith, Health Educator, 850.926.0400 x. 215 or Grace\_Keith@doh.state.fl.us

## Best Choices for a Healthy Diet

- [Lean meat and poultry \(avoid lunch meats and processed meats like sausage and bacon\)](#)
- [Fish high in omega-3s](#)

Omega-3s are a group of polyunsaturated fatty acids that come from food sources, such as fish, fish oil, some vegetable oils (primarily canola and soybean), walnuts, wheat germ, and certain dietary supplements. As supplements, omega-3s are marketed as capsules or oils, often as fish oil. Omega-3s have been of interest for decreasing a person's risk for heart disease and stroke.



Choose fish that is high in omega-3 fats. Examples include: Mackerel, Herring, Sardines, Salmon, Tuna



- [Low carb fruits and veggies](#). All fruits and vegetables have carbohydrates. Know the carb content of your produce choices.

[Low Carb Fruits](#): Cantaloupe = 1/2 cup, Grapefruit = 1/2, Watermelon = 3/4 cup

[High Carb Fruits](#): Banana = 1 small, Dates = 4, Mango = 1 cup, Pineapple = 1 cup

[Low Carb Veggies](#): Celery = 1/2 cup raw, Zucchini = 1/2 cup cooked, Broccoli = 1/2 cup cooked

[High Carb Veggies](#): Potatoes = 1 cup mashed, Corn = 1/2 cup raw, Peas = 1/2 cup cooked, Carrots = 1/2 cup raw

- [Dairy](#) - Yogurt can help you reach your calcium goal, but beware, not all yogurt is created equal. Most yogurts have added sugar, which increases the carbohydrate content greatly. Some contain more than 35 grams carbohydrate per 6-ounce serving. Light yogurts are sweetened with artificial sweeteners and have lower carbohydrate contents (usually around 15 grams carbohydrate per serving).



Some companies have come out with even lower-carbohydrate yogurt options, such as Dannon Light n' Fit, Carb and Sugar Control, which contains 4.5 grams of carbohydrate per serving.

Plain yogurts are also lower in carbohydrates and can be eaten plain or sweetened with sugar-free jam, artificial sweeteners, or by adding fresh fruit. Greek yogurts have become a hot new product and are popping up in grocery stores everywhere, but the carb and fat content can vary in these yogurts too.

- [Here are some excellent snack choices](#): String cheese, Sugar-free Jell-O, Fresh green veggies, Soy crisps, Popcorn, Unsalted nuts, Peanut butter, Avocado slices, Hard-boiled eggs

### Hands-Only CPR, No Excuses



The next Hands-only CPR class is on Thursday, April 26, 7-9 p.m. at the health department. The course is endorsed by the American Safety and Health Institute. Call 926-0400, ext. 215 for more information or to register for a class. The cost is \$25.00 per person.

The Wakulla County Health Department now has a Service Provider Kiosk to help you find who and what you are looking for. The kiosk is located in the lobby of the health department, which is open Monday through Friday, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

You can search sites such as 211Big Bend, Whole Child Leon, Florida Department of Children and Families and Wakulla County Coalition for Youth Resource Directory. Many providers are local and have sliding scales for those families in crisis. You can find all types of services from daily needs to emergency assistance. This service is also very helpful in the event that you have just moved into the area. The kiosk and electronic referral system were made possible through a grant sponsored by the Blue Foundation of Florida. There is no charge to use the kiosk.

