



**Grocery Shopping**

You may have noticed by now that more than one article on this site has mentioned the importance of meal planning. That’s because it’s a key element of insuring the availability of healthful foods for your meals and snacks, and it simply can’t be stressed enough.

Sharpening your shopping skills at the local supermarket can go a long way toward helping you become an efficient meal-planner. It can also turn what has always felt like a chore into something you look forward to.

Fortunately, grocery stores offer more healthful, convenient and economical choices than ever. However, modern supermarkets can at times feel overwhelming. Distractions abound. Displays and arrows and colorful signage attempt to lead you down aisles to products that aren’t on your list--and very often have *no business* being on it. You feel controlled by the store, when it should be the other way around.

The more you understand the dynamics of the supermarket, the more you can gain control of your shopping experience. In this article, we will take a virtual walk through the grocery store aisles and see what we can find.

Grocery stores are usually set up with the freshest, least processed foods on the outer aisles. This includes the meat, fish and poultry sections, dairy section, and bakery and deli departments. You will want to spend most of your time in these aisles to choose foods in their ‘closest to nature’ form.

**Beef and pork** (red meat) have traditionally received a bad rap in the nutrition department. Much of this criticism is unfair. There are many lower fat, nutritious and delicious choices available in red meats. They offer the best source of iron in the diet and provide up to 10 grams of protein per cooked ounce. Look for meats labeled as ‘select.’ These have less marbling and minimal fat trim. Plan to bake, broil, stir-fry, or sauté in broth, rather than in butter or oil. Cut meat into small pieces. This makes it easier to chew and digest.

Nutrition Information for a 3 oz cooked serving of lean or select options.

**Beef**

<i>Cut</i>	<i>Calories</i>	<i>Fat (grams)</i>	<i>Protein (grams)</i>
top round roast	163	3.4	31
bottom roast	146	4.6	25

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beef brisket	164	5.3	27
chuck arm pot roast	170	5.3	28
beef tenderloin	171	7.5	24

### Pork

<i>Cut</i>	<i>Calories</i>	<i>Fat (grams)</i>	<i>Protein (grams)</i>
pork tenderloin	141	4.1	24
ham	124	4.1	18
center loin roast	173	6.9	26
sirloin chops	178	7.4	27

**Fish and seafood** are in most cases naturally low in fat. Plan to bake, broil, or boil for a healthful entrée. Use lemon juice and a small amount of butter for crab legs, lobster or shrimp--or better yet, add a squirt or two of spray butter.

**Chicken and turkey** are excellent sources of protein, are usually low in fat, and can be prepared in a variety of ways. Your family may enjoy a roasted turkey breast dinner on the weekend. Then you can use the leftovers on a salad, in soup, in sandwiches or just reheated for a quick meal. Marinate boneless, skinless chicken breasts in fat-free Italian dressing and cook on the grill, stir-fry, or broil for a quick, tasty meal. Make some extra for a chicken salad or a topping for a salad later in the week. Be sure to choose lean versions of ground turkey.

**Dairy products** are a good source of both protein and calcium. Three servings of low-fat milk or yogurt a day will provide up to 24 grams of protein and 900 mg of bone-strengthening calcium. 1200-1500 mg of calcium per day is recommended to keep bones strong and healthy. Dairy products have a wide range of fat. At the low end is skim milk with 0.4 grams of fat in a cup. Whole milk has 9 grams per cup, cheese comes in at 7-9 grams per ounce, and eggnog tops the list with 19 grams per cup.

Healthy ways to add more dairy products to your diet:

- Enjoy a smoothie made with evaporated nonfat milk;
- Mix no-added-sugar chocolate syrup with milk;
- Make no-added-sugar hot cocoa with skim milk or evaporated nonfat milk;
- Sprinkle nonfat or low-fat cheese on a salad;
- Add fat-free American Singles to a sandwich;
- Make ham pinwheels with fat-free cream cheese, green onions and ham;
- Roll deli meat, fat-free cheese and salad dressing together for a bread-free sandwich.

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<b>Product</b>	<b>Protein (grams)</b>	<b>Fat (grams)</b>	<b>Calcium (mgs)</b>
evaporated nonfat milk-8 oz	20	0	744
milk, skim-8 oz	8	0	301
cottage cheese, nonfat ¼ cup	8	0	30
cottage cheese, 1% fat-1/4 cup	8	0.5	35
cottage cheese, 2% fat-1/4 cup	8	1	39
buttermilk-8 oz	8	2	285
milk, 2% -8 oz	8	5	297
milk, whole -8 oz	8	9	290
yogurt, light -8 oz	7	2	250
cheese 1 oz	7	9	200
American cheese, fat free -3/4 oz	5	0	150
cream cheese, fat free - 2T	5	0	100
American cheese -3/4 oz	4	5	100
cream cheese -2 T	2	10	23

**Vegetables**, surprisingly, are often craved by bariatric patients during the recovery nutrition phases. The crunchy texture and fresh taste of a salad is a favorite of many. Vegetables provide fiber, a host of vitamins and minerals, and anti-oxidants to enhance our immune systems. They are usually low in fat. Choose fresh or frozen vegetables rather than canned. Take small bites and chew well.

**Fresh fruit** can provide a good dose of essential vitamins and satisfy a sweet tooth as well. During the first few months after surgery, obtaining adequate protein takes precedence over obtaining the recommended servings of fruits and vegetables. After one year post-op, plan for ¾ to 1½ cups of vegetables per day and ½ to 1 cup of fruit per day.

Choosing fruits and vegetables ‘closest to nature’ (an orange instead of orange juice, for example), will provide your body with the most fiber and nutrients. It will also eliminate added sugars, fats, preservatives, and other unwanted ingredients from your diet.

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**The deli** also has some low-fat, high-protein choices. Look for lean deli meats and roasted chicken (choose the light meat without the skin). Cut meat into small pieces and add to a salad, make a breadless sandwich, or stuff pita bread for a high protein taste treat.

California subs are especially tasty in the summer months: chop deli meat, lettuce, tomato and onion into small pieces; add fat-free shredded cheddar and fat-free Italian dressing. Wrap filling in flour tortilla, slice and enjoy.

The deli's pre-made salad section may have some low-fat, low-sugar choices, but is traditionally filled with many fat and sugar-laden foods. Opt instead to make your own low-fat, no-added-sugar varieties.

**Pita bread, flour tortillas, or toasted breads** are healthful choices in the baked goods section. Also look for no-added-sugar pies, cakes, and cookies for a special occasion treat.

The interior aisles typically contain foods that have undergone a higher degree of processing, which may increase convenience but compromise the nutritional content. Read labels carefully to avoid higher amounts of added sugars and fats.

- Choose lower-fat versions of your favorite dressings. Ranch, Italian, and bleu cheese are often lower in added sugar.
- Choose baked or lower-fat crackers. Lower-fat microwave popcorn tastes great and serves as a crunchy snack.
- Ready-to-eat cereals are a quick breakfast favorite in many families. Finding a lower-sugar choice is a bit of a challenge. Many hot cereals are also available.
- The freezer section contains a multitude of no-added-sugar treats. From popsicles, fudgesicles, and ice cream to frozen fruit for smoothies, you can find many healthful choices.

The grocery store has many healthful, delicious, low-fat and no-added-sugar foods. Many foods are pre-prepared or require minimal preparation--a healthful fast food alternative. Choose a variety of foods for optimal health

The main thing to remember about the grocery store is that it makes no judgments on what you buy, meaning it's just as willing to supply you with the unhealthy fare as food that's good for you. But once you make up your mind to shop healthy, and steer clear of the other stuff, you'll find yourself enjoying the experience more and more every time you go. Happy shopping!

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