



It all starts in the grocery store. The foods you choose to stock your pantry, refrigerator, and freezers are the foundation for your diet.

Grocery shopping can be daunting. It can be overwhelming to try to choose the healthiest foods from among all the options that line every aisle. And new trends and choices pop up every day, from fortified foods to upscale gourmet.

To help you navigate the supermarket, here are some expert tips to help you read food labels and choose healthy products. We've also got a top 10 list of nutritious foods to add to your grocery cart.

### **Label Reading Tips**

The first thing you'll see is the label on the front of the food package. Manufacturers can say most anything they want on the front label (to get the real story, see the Nutrition Facts panel on the back). Here are some terms you may see there, and what they really mean:

- **Fortified, enriched, added, extra, and plus.** This means nutrients such as minerals and fiber have been removed and vitamins added in processing. Look for 100% whole-wheat bread and high-fiber, low-sugar cereals.
- **Fruit drink.** This means there's probably little or no real fruit, and lots of sugar. Look for products that say "100% Fruit Juice."
- **Made with wheat, rye, or multigrain.** These products may have very little whole grain. Look for the word "whole" before the grain to ensure you're getting a 100% whole-grain product.
- **Natural.** The manufacturer started with a natural source, but once it's processed the food may not resemble anything natural. Look for "100% All Natural" and "No Preservatives."
- **Organically grown, pesticide-free, or no artificial ingredients.** Trust only labels that say "Certified Organically Grown."
- **Sugar-free or fat-free.** Don't assume the product is low-calorie. The manufacturer may have compensated with unhealthy ingredients that don't taste very good -- and have no fewer calories than the real thing.

Here are some key phrases you'll see on the Nutrition Facts panel on the back of the package:

- **Serving Size.** Portion control is important for weight management, but don't expect manufacturers to make it easy for you. Pop-Tarts, for instance, come two to a package. The label says one serving is 200 calories -- for "one pastry."
- **Calories and Calories From Fat.** This tells you how many calories are in a serving, and how many of those calories come from fat. Remember that this information is for one serving as defined on the label.
- **Nutrients by Weight and Percentage of Daily Value (%DV).** This shows how much of each nutrient is in one serving, by weight in grams and by %DV. This symbol refers to the recommended daily allowance for a nutrient based on a 2,000-calorie diet (some nutrients, such as sugar and protein, don't have a %DV). Fats are listed as "Total Fat" and also broken down so you can see how much is unhealthy saturated fat and trans fat.
- **Vitamins and Minerals.** Vitamins and minerals are listed by %DV only. Pay particular attention to vitamin A, vitamin C, calcium, and iron; most Americans don't get enough in their diets.

**Ingredients.** They're listed in order from the greatest amount to the least. Experts offer a rule of thumb: the fewer the ingredients, the better