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Shopping Guidelines

Produce

Although it is usually more expensive, organic produce is much healthier and nutritious than non-organic produce. Ideally all produce should be fresh, ripe, in season and locally grown. Look for a local farmer's market or food co-op, or consider mail-ordering organic food if there is none in your area.

Colour counts — bring home an entire rainbow of colourful fruits and vegetables if your Eating Guidelines allows them.

Meat

Buy only organic or free-range, hormone and antibiotic-free meats whenever possible. Lean meat is always healthiest. If it is not available then trim off all excess fat before cooking.

Poultry

Poultry should be organic or free-range, antibiotic and hormone-free.

Eggs

Ensure that you purchase eggs that are organic or from free-range, antibiotic and hormone-free poultry.

Eggs labelled as "High Omega 3" are especially healthy.

Seafood

Buy only smaller varieties of cold water, non-farm-raised fish or seafood. Fish should smell a bit like the sea but fresh – it should not smell bad.

Buy whole, fresh foods only

Read labels carefully and look for foods that contain only one ingredient. Also look for the word "whole" before the first ingredient on the label or ingredient list. Fresh food is more nutritious than frozen, frozen is better than canned. Always check for expiration or production dates on the label.¹

To avoid

Non-domestic produce

Non-organic fruits and vegetables raised in foreign countries are almost always sprayed with pesticides, preservatives, faecal fertilizers, or other harmful chemicals – just like most non-organic foods from the US.

Ground meat

Butcher cuts are much safer than pre-ground meat. A patty of ground beef can contain body parts from up to 80 cattle whose health is unknown. If you want ground meat buy a whole cut and grind it yourself or have your butcher grind it for you.



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Frozen poultry

Most frozen poultry is packaged by poultry processors who use hormones to maximize bird size and growth rate, and must use antibiotics to prevent disease because of the extreme cage-crowding found in a typical poultry "farm". The hormones and antibiotics remain in the bird.

Most fish and seafood

Ensure the product is wild-caught. Virtually all seafood, whether from fresh or salt water, is now contaminated with toxic metals and dangerous chemicals. Farm-raised seafood is generally the least healthy and most contaminated. Larger fish species are generally far more contaminated than smaller species. Warm water species are less safe than those from cold water. If you are pregnant it is usually advisable to avoid seafood altogether.

Food with additives

Avoid purchasing foods with labels listing additives, colours, preservatives, emulsifiers, thickeners, anti-caking agents, bulking agents, flavourings, added seasonings or sauces, or chemical names you don't know or can't pronounce.

Non-whole and processed foods

Avoid products with more than one ingredient. These are NOT whole foods. Look for "100%" then carefully read what that 100% actually is. Breads and pasta are actually processed foods; whole, un-ground grains are always healthier. If you must buy breads or pasta look for the word "whole" when the label describes the grains they came from. In general, avoid packaged foods as these tend to have multiple ingredients.

Deceptive labelling

The word "natural" does not mean healthy or safe. Insect parts and rodent droppings are also "natural".

Hydrogenated fats and artificial sweeteners

They aren't healthy and should be strictly avoided. ¹

1. Diet Therapy Software, Food Pharmacy, 2007