



## shopping lists promote healthier choices

If you want to cut down on impulse buying, save money, and make better food choices, take a few minutes to plan a shopping list before you get to the grocery store.

### why lists help

Researchers from Duke University, the University of California, Los Angeles, and the University of Florida have confirmed what many of us always suspected: When faced with what to buy at the grocery store without a shopping list, the decision is “stimulus-based.”

This means, we base our purchase on what is directly in front of us, regardless of whether we really need it or whether it’s good for us.

Visiting certain grocery aisles with no plan or limits can cause significant damage in terms of the calories, fats, and sugars you and your family will consume. Compare being a marketing target in a candy aisle versus a fresh produce aisle!

Planning shopping lists is particularly important if you have children, if you are frail, if you live a busy lifestyle, or if you are trying to manage a medical condition. It will save you time and reduce the anxiety associated with that frequently asked question shortly

before meal time: “What’s for dinner?”

### how to plan and shop

1. Plan your meals a week in advance, and compile a list of the food items you will need to prepare and cook your meals.
2. Most of your list should contain items for healthy meals and snack options; place a limit on the number and/or quantity of rich foods, such as cake, ice cream, potato chips, or chocolate.
3. Look for “real” foods and those that are minimally processed, for example, look for 100 percent fruit juice or whole-grain bread.
4. Think variety. Choose seasonal fruits and try new vegetables in your favorite recipes.
5. Organic foods are a great option, but not the most economical. Either way, emphasize more plant foods and less meats and full-fat dairy products in your shopping cart.
6. Don’t go shopping on an empty stomach—you are likely to buy more than you really need.

Nutritionist Sue Radd is the award-winning author of *The Breakfast Book* and co-author of *Eat To Live*, internationally acclaimed for showing how savvy eating can combat cancer and heart disease and improve well-being. See the latest at <http://www.sueradd.com>.