



Shopping



Health



Wellness



Nutrition



Support

Introduction

Shopping for food is an essential task if we want to eat a healthy diet and reduce the amount of money we spend on food. While eating meals from takeaways and restaurants is ok now and then, it's very expensive and, most of the time, does not provide the best nutrients for our health. By following some simple tips, food shopping can become easier.

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Shopping

If someone asked you to walk into a supermarket and come out with a week's worth of food you could use to create healthy nutritious meals for a family, you'd probably feel quite daunted.

There are many things to consider in your shop, including family favorites, food cost, how long meals take to make, and healthy options for all. Use the following tips to make your weekly shop easier and healthier.

Stick to the plan

We love routine, and anything that takes us outside our comfort zone can cause us to become anxious and affect our decision making. It's no different when it comes to shopping.

How often do you visit the supermarket on your way home from work after a long, tiring day? Or with your children after a sleepless night or early start? Maybe you've not eaten all day and are shopping to restock an empty fridge?

Shopping when you feel tired and hungry is not the best thing to do. You'll be drawn to pre-prepared foods as they are the quick and easy option, or you might be drawn to comfort foods, such as biscuits and cakes after a difficult day.

Picking a set day and time each week to do your shopping, either in store or online, can help with planning. By shopping on a weekly basis you will soon start to spot patterns of foods that your household eats. Habits take time to develop, but a routine day for the 'big shop' is the best place to start.

Plan for family favourites, balance and lifestyle

Ensuring the whole family or household is involved in the planning will help ease the workload of shopping. Ask the kids what they would like for meals through the week to help minimise mealtime sulks when they aren't served their favourites!

Consider the week ahead, and how school, work or other events will affect what type of meals you are going to plan. Busy weeks will require quick and easy to prepare meals or batch cooking. Plan for the comfort foods and roast dinners when you know there is time to cook.

Consider the balance of the meals you plan. For example, if you have a lot of red meat or processed foods then you may want to consider smart swaps to balance the week with more fish or meat-free days. Planning for a wider range of foods with help to improve your health.

Write a list

Make a list of meals for the week, but make sure to be flexible too. For example, list a few different options for breakfast so there can be a choice for everyone. Always have a back-up plan in case you suddenly find yourself short on time.

Once your meal plan is set, it's time to write your shopping list. Writing a list will help you to stay on task while shopping. It's also a good idea to avoid shopping when you're hungry to stop yourself grabbing more highly processed, ready to eat foods.

Online shopping

Online shopping allows you to get your shopping done without even having to leave your house. This is convenient when you can't get to the supermarket, and it also allows you to stick to a budget and not get distracted by offers and unnecessary items, or be pressured into buying less nutritious options. You have ultimate control of what is in your shopping basket.

Top-up shops

Not all supermarkets will stock the items you need for your meals. Less frequent visits to other larger supermarket chains can often be useful for more specialist items. Food pantries can also be useful for affordable food options that have been saved from going to landfill. These can be a great way of stretching your budget further and doing your bit for the environment.

Final thought

Even with the best of intentions, life can sometimes get in the way of a well-planned meal or shopping routine - so don't worry if you hit road bumps along the way. In the long run, by following a few simple tips, you can make shopping for food less stressful, less wasteful, and better for your health.

To get the best deal on foods, you're probably going to need to visit three or four different supermarkets. This is unrealistic, so remember to choose the best deals you can. Use local food clubs to access affordable food that would be going to waste and follow the Brand Downshift Challenge by visiting www.moneysavingexpert.com/shopping/downshift-challenge.

If you would like to learn more or require more information and support, please get in touch!

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