



Lady of America Newsletter – May 2010 – Game On! Eating: Avoiding Grocery Store Traps

A trip to the grocery store can be a pleasurable experience for some people and a nightmare for others. What seems like an easy task can actually derail even the best intentions.



Grocery stores are designed to keep customers wandering the aisles and they manipulate buyers into spending more than planned from the moment they walk through the doors and smell the fresh baked goods. Who can resist the smell of fresh baked cookies and bread? The store's set-up is also another way to get customers to do some impulse buying. From the placement of brand named items and the highest-priced items strategically placed at eye level to the location of food items across the perimeter, the goal is to buy, buy, buy. And more may not necessarily be the healthiest foods for you and your family.

No matter what your healthy eating goals are, you can get in and out of the grocery store faster and smarter. It just takes a little planning. Follow these grocery shopping tips to help you make wiser choices, even if you end up doing some impulse buying.

- ❖ **Create a Grocery List.** Shopping with a list keeps you focused and on track. Be sure that the list includes something from every section: dairy, meat, breads, fruits/vegetables, canned/condiments, grains/cereal and frozen.
- ❖ **Eat Before You Go.** If you shop hungry you're more likely to buy from the bakery or purchase high-calorie processed foods. Experts suggest having a healthy mini snack — 150 to 200 calories — 30 minutes prior to shopping. Be sure the snack contains some fat, protein and a carb. Some good snacks are apple slices with almond butter or whole wheat crackers with peanut butter and a piece of fruit. If you aren't able to eat a mini snack, grab a handful of almonds.
- ❖ **Read Labels.** Even though you buy a product regularly, be sure to read both the nutrition label and ingredient list because ingredients can change from time to time. Also, be sure to look for hidden trans fat. Just because the nutrition label says 0% trans fat, the ingredient list may list "partially hydrogenated oil."
- ❖ **Shop Once a Week.** Shopping once a week may be too little for fresh produce, so plan on stopping in mid-week to replenish only those items. Or, if possible, stop at a fruit market or farmer's market on the weekend.
- ❖ **Load the Cart Wisely.** Tanya Zuckerbrot, RD, suggests loading your cart with the foods that meet your main dietary goals first and snacks last. "If you run out of time or get impatient and leave quickly, you'll already have what you need most in your cart and ready for checkout. If your goal is fast, healthy dinners, pick up the ingredients for a stir-fry before moving on to cereals," she told Prevention magazine readers.