

SHOPPING SECRETS

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I'll be honest, shopping can get really confusing these days. There are so many labels, claims and new buzz words like "organic", "all-natural", "grass-fed", and "fortified" it's hard to know what it all means.

The bad news is that there's more fast food, fried food, and just flat out bad-for-you-food than ever before. I have had patients say to me, "it's so hard to eat healthy because there's so many unhealthy choices!"

And I usually respond, "Yes, you're right, there are a lot of unhealthy choices... but at the same time **we have access to more superfoods than anytime in history!**"

For instance, 100 years ago you could only get food from your local area. But today, you can consume anti-oxidant rich berries from the amazon, chia seeds from south america, chlorella from the pacific ocean, and wild salmon from Alaska. So even though there are a lot of bad options, we also have more healthy options than ever before.



The key is knowing these shopping secrets of how to read food labels, what to look for, and where to shop. Let's start by talking about what certain terms actually mean and then we'll talk about what to look for on food labels.

All-Natural

What does the term "all-natural" really mean? Absolutely nothing. Any supplement company or food product from granola to soda can be labeled all-natural and it isn't regulated by anyone including the FDA or the government.

Fortified and Enriched

These terms can make a food product sound like they are bursting with

vitamins and minerals. But the truth is for a product to have a term like “enriched with calcium” means the product only has to have 10% of the daily value of that specific nutrient.

Organic

Now the big one! If you want to talk about loop holes, “organic” is a good place to start. For instance, something can be labeled “organic” but contain 95% or as little as 70% organic ingredients.

One sad truth about the organic industry is that 87% of organic companies today are owned by big conglomerates like General Mills, Nestle, and Coca-Cola. These big companies realize that the organic industry is booming so they’re going around and buying up all of the family owned health companies.

Typically, these big companies have done the bare minimum to get by. They haven’t shown interest in creating the best product, but instead are more concerned with the bottom line.

However, even though there are some loop-holes in organic for certain food categories I believe it is well worth the investment to purchase organic foods. The term organic generally means that the food product has not been treated with pesticides, herbicides, fungicides, anti-biotics, added chemicals, and steroids.

If you are shopping on a budget there are certain foods that are more important to buy organic than others. Here is a list of how to prioritize your organic shopping. There are three important categories, the “toxic two” which are by far the most important food to buy organic, the “dirty dozen” which is of secondary importance, and the “clean fifteen” which really isn’t that important.

Toxic Two

Even more important than choosing organic produce, organic meat and dairy are critical as their conventional counterparts can contain toxins stored in their fat. Also, I recommend staying away from pork, farm-raised fish and shellfish.

1. Conventional Meat
2. Conventional Dairy

Instead, replace these conventional products with organic 100% pasture-fed beef, wild caught fish, pastured eggs and poultry, green-fed dairy, and wild game.

Dirty Dozen

The fruits and vegetables that rank the highest in pesticide load are known as the “dirty dozen”, and the Environmental Working Group advises that if you can’t afford to buy all organic produce, you should at least buy organic versions of these 12 items. A good rule of thumb is if you consume the outer layer or the peel it’s more important to buy organic.

- | | |
|---------------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Apples | 7. Bell Peppers |
| 2. Strawberries | 8. Nectarines |
| 3. Grapes | 9. Cucumbers |
| 4. Celery | 10. Potatoes |
| 5. Peaches | 11. Cherry Tomatoes |
| 6. Green Leafy Vegetables | 12. Hot Peppers |

Clean Fifteen

The produce that ends up on this list have the least amount of pesticide contamination and are known as the Clean 15. In general, foods where you do not eat the outside or the peel have lower levels of pesticides.

- | | |
|-------------------|----------------|
| 1. Mushrooms | 9. Papayas |
| 2. Sweet Potatoes | 10. Sweet Peas |
| 3. Cantaloupe | 11. Cabbage |
| 4. Grapefruit | 12. Avocados |
| 5. Kiwi | 13. Pineapple |
| 6. Eggplant | 14. Onions |
| 7. Asparagus | 15. Corn |
| 8. Mangoes | |

Grass-Fed

This term is now a standard that can be applied to animals that consume grass for some of their lives but not all of their lives. The “grass-fed” standard today means a cow has to be fed grass only 30% of their lives and then they can be grain-finished the last 90 days of their lives.

So when shopping for beef, bison, or lamb look for labels that say 100% grass-fed, or green-fed which is the highest standard available today.

This is important because when ruminant animals are fed grass they have higher levels of omega-3 fatty acids which reduce inflammation and CLA that promotes fat loss. On the other hand, when animals are fed grains they contain large amounts of omega-6 fats that cause inflammation increasing your likelihood of heart disease and other chronic illnesses.

Pastured

Is essentially the same as “grass-fed” but applies to chicken and pigs that are raised in green pasture. Pastured chickens spend more time outside where they can consume insects, seeds, and other things they were created to consume. Also, breathing in fresh air and daily sunshine is vital for the health of animals, just like it is vital for our own health.

I don't recommend consuming pork of any kind even from pasture raised pigs. Pigs systems store toxins so should never be consumed as part of a healthy toxic free diet.

Wild Caught vs. Farm Raised

Just like you want to avoid eating animals that are raised in unnatural conditions and fed an unnatural diet of GMO corn, soy, and grain, you also want to avoid fish with the same problems.

Most fish like wild caught salmon feed on other fish, crustaceans, and even algae. This causes salmon to have a reddish orange tint to it's skin because of the antioxidant astaxanthin and the omega-3 fats. However that is only wild-caught salmon. Farm raised fish including farm raised salmon doesn't contain large amounts of omega-3 fats or astaxanthin.

Also, they contain chemicals called PCB's, dioxins and other chemicals that are highly toxic.

So when eating fish while dining out, only consume wild-caught and look for wild-caught in your grocery store. Just to give you a shopping secret,

wild-caught salmon can cost \$30+ at a fine restaurant, but the same salmon can also be found for \$3.00/can at your local grocery store. One of my favorite gourmet meals is salmon patties, which is something your whole family will love!

Fake Food Products

Many companies will try and fool you by taking a food that is known for it's unique health properties and adding it into a product only for marketing purposes. The trouble is, many of these companies put either minuscule amounts of that food in the product, or they process it to the point that it doesn't have benefits, or... get this, they put in something artificial so it really doesn't have that ingredient in it at all! Talk about food deception!

Let me give you several examples of this. The first are blueberries found in so called blueberry muffins. A third-party organization went and tested muffins with fruit and blueberries and found that there were no blueberries present. Instead, it was blue food dye with blueberry flavoring that was made in a lab.

The next outrageous fake food hoax is with guacamole. According to a report from Natural News they went and tested several brands of "guacamole dip" and found NO Avocado. Instead, the product contained GMO soybean oil, pasteurized dairy, GMO corn extract, and green and yellow food coloring.

And last, but certainly not least, is many fast food companies that sell strawberry milk shakes put ZERO strawberries in the shake and sometimes no real milk either. What is a strawberry milk shake without the milk and strawberries. Here are the actual list of ingredients for a strawberry milk shake from a popular fast food restaurant:

Amyl acetate, amyl butyrate, amyl valerate, anethol, anisyl formate, benzyl acetate, benzyl isobutyrate, butyric acid, cinnamyl isobutyrate, cinnamyl valerate, cognac essential oil, diacetyl, dipropyl ketone, ethyl acetate, ethyl amyloketone, ethyl butyrate, ethyl cinnamate, ethyl heptanoate, ethyl heptylate, ethyl lactate, ethyl methylphenylglycidate, ethyl nitrate, ethyl propionate ethyl valerate, heliotropin, hydroxyphenyl-2-butanone (10% solution in alcohol), ionone, isobutyl anthranilate, isobutyl butyrate, lemon essential oil, maltol, 4-methylacetophenone, methyl anthranilate, methyl benzoate, methyl cinnamate, methyl heptane carbonate, methyl naphthyl ketone, methyl salicylate, mint essential oil, neroli essential oil, nerolin, neryl isobutyrate, orris butter, phenethyl alcohol, rose, rum ether, undecalactone, vanillin, and solvent.

Can you believe this? There is zero food in this, it's all fake. Back 20+ years ago, a strawberry milk shake had four main ingredients: milk, cream, strawberries, and sugar. Today it is full of chemicals that your body doesn't even recognize as food.

So if you really want a strawberry milk shake, I recommend you use raw milk, coconut milk, strawberries, raw honey, coconut nectar, and vanilla extract. It tastes even better and is healthy as well.

Reading Food Labels

Also, when it comes to reading food labels there are a few things I want to cover. First, I do think it is important to look at the Fat, Carbohydrates, Protein, and Sodium in each product. However, I don't think this is the most important thing. I think by far the most important thing to look at is the list of INGREDIENTS. Here's a sample of a common food label you might find on a product:

Nutrition Facts	
Serving Size 1 ounce Servings in bag 4	
Amount Per Serving	
Calories 155	Calories from Fat 93
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 11g	16%
Saturated Fat 3g	15%
Trans Fat	
Cholesterol 0mg	0%
Sodium 148mg	6%
Total Carbohydrate 14g	5%
Dietary Fiber 1g	5%
Sugars 1g	
Protein 2g	
Vitamin A 0%	• Vitamin C 9%
Calcium 1%	• Iron 3%

* Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your daily values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs.

Here's what you should try and shoot for with most meals.

Protein: I recommend trying to get 20-30 grams of protein in each meal. And when reading the ingredients list you want this protein to be organic or if it's a food bar or protein bar have it come from whey protein, brown rice protein, pea protein, or hemp protein. Remember, stay away from soy.

Fat: You want to be getting your fats from organic meat, organic dairy, nuts, seeds, and coconut. I would stay away from refined canola oil, safflower oil, sunflower oil, and any vegetable oils. And remember, not all saturated fat is bad, coconut is full of "good" saturated fats. This is again why it is so important to not only read the label but also the ingredients.

Sodium: First I would look for the type of sodium on the ingredients list. You want to look for sea salt rather than something just labeled as salt or iodized salt. And you typically want to keep this under 500 mg per meal.

Carbohydrates: Now here is the tricky one. Sugar can be hidden under many names. But this is really where the food label and nutrition facts do come in handy. You want to keep your sugar intake as low as possible. If you are going to consume any form of sugar you are best off getting that first thing in the morning or directly after a workout. I recommend using only raw honey, coconut nectar, maple syrup and then of course stevia as your sweeteners.

Here are the "code words" for hidden sugar: agave nectar, corn syrup, dextrin, dextrose, fructose, fruit juice concentrate, glucose, high-fructose corn syrup, honey, maltodextrin, molasses, rice syrup, saccharose, sorghum, sucrose, turbinado, xylose.

In addition to keeping sugar to a minimum, you'll also want to watch out for too many carbohydrates as well. I try and get less than 30 grams of Net Carbs per meal. Net Carbs = Total Carbs - Fiber.

Fiber is something you want to look for on a label. Typically, the more the merrier, especially if it contains soluble fiber.

Ingredients List

Obviously, any food without a label like fresh vegetables, fruits, nuts, and meat are always better than something found in a box. But if you are buying something like nut butter, oils, or organic pasta sauce, it's good to know what to look for and what not to look for.

There are many companies that make marketing claims on the front of the box like “made with whole grains”, “no added sugar”, “low fat”, “natural”, and “high in vitamin C”. But the bottom line in what you're looking for is the FEWER the ingredients the better. Check out this ingredients list from a popular food bar:

Nutrition Facts	
Serving Size	1 Bar (37g)
Servings Per Container	8
Amount Per Serving	
Calories	130
Calories from Fat	30
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat	3g 5%
Saturated Fat	0.5g 3%
Trans Fat	0g
Cholesterol	0mg 0%
Sodium	105mg 4%
Total Carbohydrate	23g 8%
Dietary Fiber	2g 6%
Sugars	12g
Protein	2g
Vitamin A	15%
Vitamin C	0%
Calcium	20%
Iron	10%
Thiamin	15%
Riboflavin	25%
Niacin	25%
Vitamin B ₆	25%
Folic Acid	10%
Zinc	10%
*Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000-calorie diet. Your daily values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs:	
	Calories 2,000 2,500
Total Fat	Less than 65g 80g
Sat. Fat	Less than 20g 25g
Cholesterol	Less than 300mg 300mg
Sodium	Less than 2,400mg 2,400mg
Total Carbohydrate	300g 375g
Dietary Fiber	25g 30g
Calories per gram: Fat 9 • Carbohydrate 4 • Protein 4	

INGREDIENTS: FILLING	
HIGH FRUCTOSE CORN SYRUP	CORN SYRUP, GLYCERIN, SUGAR, APPLE PUREE CONCENTRATE, STRAWBERRY PUREE CONCENTRATE, WATER, BLUEBERRY PUREE CONCENTRATE, NATURAL AND ARTIFICIAL FLAVOR, SODIUM ALGINATE, RASPBERRY PUREE CONCENTRATE, MODIFIED CORN STARCH, CITRIC ACID, MALIC ACID, METHYLCELLULOSE, DICALCIUM PHOSPHATE (RED #40, BLUE #1), WHOLE GRAIN ROLLED OATS, ENRICHED FLOUR (WHEAT FLOUR, NIACIN, REDUCED IRON, THIAMIN MONONITRATE [VITAMIN B ₁], RIBOFLAVIN [VITAMIN B ₂], FOLIC ACID), WHOLE WHEAT FLOUR, SUNFLOWER AND/OR SOYBEAN OIL WITH TBHQ FOR FRESHNESS, HIGH FRUCTOSE CORN SYRUP, SUGAR, CONTAINS TWO PERCENT OR LESS OF HONEY, DEXTROSE, CALCIUM CARBONATE, SOLUBLE CORN FIBER, NONFAT DRY MILK, WHEAT BRAN, SALT, CELLULOSE, POTASSIUM BICARBONATE (LEAVENING), NATURAL AND ARTIFICIAL FLAVOR, MONO- AND DIGLYCERIDES, PROPYLENE GLYCOL ESTERS OF FATTY ACIDS, SOY LECITHIN, WHEAT GLUTEN, NIACINAMIDE, SODIUM STEAROYL LACTYLATE, VITAMIN A PALMITATE, CARRAGEENAN, ZINC OXIDE, REDUCED IRON, GUAR GUM, PYRIDOXINE HYDROCHLORIDE (VITAMIN B ₆), THIAMIN HYDROCHLORIDE (VITAMIN B ₁), RIBOFLAVIN (VITAMIN B ₂), FOLIC ACID.
CONTAINS WHEAT, MILK AND SOY INGREDIENTS.	

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On the front of this box they made all of the claims I mentioned above. But as you can clearly see, this product is chocked full of high fructose corn syrup, artificial colorings, soy, and hydrogenated oils. Talk about toxic–this product has over 60 ingredients!

Remember–the less ingredients the better. And when shopping or eating out, always remember to ask the question... **“Is this a real food or a fake food?”**