

Living on WELL Street Blog: **“Create a Healthy Grocery List”**

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“The food you eat can be either the safest and most powerful form of medicine or the slowest form of poison.” – Ann Wigmore, holistic health practitioner and author

Good nutrition starts with the choices that we make when we shop. Healthy food choices at home can only be made when healthy food is available. A healthy food-shopping list not only ensures that there is nutritious food to eat, but it also helps avoid impulse buying that leads to unhealthy eating later on. When approached as a planning guide for better health, the list creates focus, and results in saving time and money.

Michael Pollan, in his book, *In Defense of Food: An Eater’s Manifesto*, sums up all that he knows about food and health in seven words: **“Eat food, not too much, mostly plants.”** He also offers a few rules that can help us in our food shopping:

1. *Don’t eat anything your great grandmother wouldn’t recognize as food.*
2. *Don’t eat anything with more than five ingredients, or ingredients you can’t pronounce.*
3. *Stay out of the middle of the supermarket; shop on the perimeter of the store.*
4. *Don’t eat anything that won’t eventually rot.*
5. *Don’t buy food where you buy your gasoline. In the U.S., 20% of food is eaten in the car.*

If you want to make your healthy grocery list even more valuable, add nutritional information to each item. What is the proper serving size and what is the fat, cholesterol, sodium and carbohydrate content per serving? Or, color code the items on your list using the *Stop & Go Grocery Guide* system (available at WellSteps.com or at welcoa.org). Normal traffic light rules apply. Green means “Go!” Yellow means “Proceed With Caution.” And, red means “Stop!” Green foods include: whole grains, plant oils, vegetables, fruits, nuts and legumes. Yellow foods include: fish, poultry, eggs and low-fat dairy or a calcium supplement. Red foods are to be used sparingly and are comprised of: red meat, butter, white rice, white bread, potatoes, pasta and sweets. Evaluate how green your list appears and make healthy changes as necessary.

Create a Healthy Grocery List is available as a worksite health promotion activity. It contains helpful resources and tools that make this an engaging and beneficial exercise. Please find the activity on the We Choose Health 365 website at:

<http://wechoosehealth365.com/asp/public/Page.aspx?pid=15548> .

Shop Healthy!

Michael