

# Lesson 6: Healthy Food Shopping

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## Time Required

Estimated lesson timing is 40-60 minutes; however, this lesson can be expanded or shortened, as needed. We encourage you to tailor it to fit within the available class time. If time is limited, we recommend focusing on the Getting Started, Teaching Instructions and Reflections sections.

## Audience

High school students grades 9-12

## Lesson Overview

For this lesson, your students will learn from a registered dietitian how to navigate a supermarket, shop on a budget, find and select healthy foods, and read a nutrition label. Your students will use these skills to inform their recipe makeover presentation (Lesson 12). Specifically, facilitate student feedback about where they found their alternative ingredients, how the nutrition labels differed between original and substitute ingredients, and what they learned from their shopping experience.

## Getting Started

- **Why is this lesson important?** Shopping for groceries can be a daunting task, especially for those students who have never shopped for themselves or their families. They may not know where to find the foods they want to buy, how to compare prices to find the best value or how to know if they're selecting the healthiest choice. Grocery shopping is an important life skill. This lesson will help your students feel confident in their ability to prepare for and undertake a grocery shopping trip as they move closer to adulthood and making their own food purchase decisions.
- **What can you do about it?** Frame this lesson as an opportunity to demystify the grocery shopping process. Explain to students the importance of this life skill and how it will help them be healthier in the short and long term. Bringing in a registered dietitian as a guest speaker with a question-and-answer segment is a fun way for your students to learn. Building this skill will help empower them to make the right decisions the next time they shop and to share this information with their families.

## Lesson Objectives

Your students will gain new skills to:

1. Navigate the grocery store.
2. Shop for groceries on a budget and compare prices.
3. Read nutrition facts labels and front of package labels.
4. Find healthier choices among the foods they buy.

## Teacher's Lesson Preparation

<b>Preparation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Contact the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. Link: <a href="http://www.eatright.org/find-an-expert">http://www.eatright.org/find-an-expert</a></li><li>• Or contact a local grocery store to see if they have a registered dietitian on staff who could speak to your class.</li></ul>
<b>Setup</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Computers with Internet access for each student in your classroom; if not available, then try to arrange for another location, such as a library or a computer lab, with internet access.</li></ul>

## Teaching Instructions

1. Consider beginning with a stretch and exercise break (suggested activities found on page 13-14).
2. Review the learning objectives.
3. Find an outside speaker to talk with your class (see suggestions above).
4. Introduce the topic of grocery shopping and ask your students the following discussion starters to kick off the lesson:
  - How many of you shop at the grocery store to buy food for yourself or your family?
  - Do you enjoy or think you would enjoy it?
  - What questions do you have about how to navigate the grocery store?
5. Have the RD speak with your students about the following topics:
  - How to create a grocery list in advance to keep the shopping trip on track.
  - How to plan meals in advance to ensure you're buying only what you need.
  - How to navigate the grocery store.
    - Where can the healthiest foods be found?
    - Where are fresh foods vs. packaged foods?
    - What is the best "path" for navigating a store to avoid impulse purchases of foods with low nutrient density?
    - What marketing strategies do stores use to influence shopper choices?

- How to shop for groceries on a budget.
    - What should you look for when comparing two similar products?
    - How do store brands compare to brand names?
      - What are the pros and cons of choosing fresh versus frozen or canned forms of the same food?
      - What does organic mean with respect to nutrients and cost?
  - How to find healthier choices among the foods they buy.
    - Have your students discuss favorite foods. Have your students discuss with the RD some potential healthier choices.
    - How to read nutrition facts labels and front of package labels.
6. Following the presentation, have your students go to a local grocery store's online shopping site. Enter your own ZIP code, or if local service is not available, enter ZIP Code 20001 as a default choice.
  7. Set a "virtual" budget for your students to shop for a meal. Have them plan a meal and grocery list for it.
    - Ask them to compare the prices between grocery store "house" brands and better known national brands and to compare the nutrition facts panels for these products.
    - Ask them to compare the cost of conventional versus organic foods.
  8. In choosing products for their meals, how do "convenience" foods affect their buying power?
    - What impact do convenience foods have on the nutritional quality of products, such salt (sodium) content, added sugars and types of fat used?
    - How do those facts affect their decision to buy a product?
  9. What effect does buying in bulk have on their food budget?

 Tip

If you can't find an outside speaker to talk with your class, use the USDA's MyPlate website to go through Tips for Every Aisle of the grocery store..

Link: <https://www.choosemyplate.gov/tips-for-every-aisle>



## Beyond the Classroom

### **In School**

Work with art teacher to develop posters that promote healthful shopping: e.g., smart navigation of supermarket layout; checking the fine print (nutrition facts); and avoiding impulse purchases at checkout.

### **Out of School**

Interview store managers to learn marketing strategies used to encourage shoppers' purchase of specific items. Create a family shopping list and go shopping for everything together. Discuss with family what facilitated or impeded making healthier choices.

### **Wellness Council**

Work with neighborhood food retailers frequented by teens to create and introduce a strategy for promoting healthier snack purchases.