

Finding Healthy Foods for Your Wellness

by Cathy Fisher

There are several sources of "whole" foods for a diet that will support your wellness plan:

Your Backyard

If you are blessed with a green thumb and a little green space to "grow your own," the best whole foods are those you grow yourself. This way, you know with some confidence what went into growing them. Planting and tending a garden is a fun activity for the whole family, but the best part is the harvest. Whether you prepare a meal from what you have grown or use your garden for snacks on hand, the joy of growing your own food for wellness is the best source of eating for success. Local garden centers offer support in how to get your culinary garden underway. When the weather/seasons don't support an outdoor garden, a countertop garden, such as Aeorgrow, (see Aerogrow.com), is a way alternative to bring your garden indoors.

Farmers' Market

We are so fortunate to have excellent farmers' markets in the area, (Tuesdays at Sandhill and Thursdays at Lake Carolina are two examples). A great variety of whole foods are available, depending on the season, most locally grown and some even certified organic. Meeting and knowing the farmer personally helps you understand how your food was grown or raised, since some non-organic certified foods may still be all natural and healthy, but not officially certified. Remember, many local small farmers are feeding their families from these same crops and want the healthiest and best on their tables, too.

Grocery Store

This is where most of us get our foods for our eating plans. Some tips for effective grocery shopping: Shop the perimeter of the store (produce, dairy, meats, etc; not the bakery though!); this is where you will find most of the whole foods. Avoid wandering up and down each aisle; not only does this waste time, but is too tempting! If convenient, try out the closest health food store that has a full selection of produce, meat and dairy, they tend to only offer organic, non-GMO and non-radiated produce and meats as well as meats and dairy that are rBGH and antibiotic free.

Always have a plan. Be sure to have your grocery list you prepared based on your weekly eating plan. Shop based only on your plan to save time in the store and also save



money. Better yet, for some grocery stores you can shop online and let the store gather up your grocery list items so you only need to pay and go. Avoid the biggest danger to diet and budget and never go to the grocery store hungry! Everything looks good, especially the lovely packaging, when your stomach is growling.

Restaurants

There is no doubt that at some point you will find yourself eating out at restaurants, whether for pleasure or out of necessity. Some strategies to keep on track with your eating for wellness are:

- Look for whole foods on the menu (make this a "treasure hunt").
- Order an "undressed" side salad (no bacon bits, croutons, etc.).
- Include a side order of "naked" veggies (may not always be available, but if enough of us are asking for this, perhaps more restaurants will begin offering a variety of veggies rather than potatoes, which are not a veggie!).
- See if a breaded sandwich comes in a wrap or salad version, perhaps even a lettuce wrap
- Have at least half your meal packed "to go" either before or when you are served. Due to our perception of value, most restaurants promote the American trend of portion distortion, in some cases serving an individual meal that could feed up to four people!

When developing your eating plan, identify where you will obtain your food, keeping these tips in mind.

For more tips on finding food to support your diet for wellness, or for a professional guided grocery shopping tour or kitchen clean-out call, Cathy Fisher at New World Wellness Center, Lake Carolina on the Green, (803) 788-8887, or visit NewWorldWellness.org. See ad page 13.