

April 2006

Nutrition Notes

A Monthly Newsletter About Health and Nutrition



Savvy Supermarket Shopping

The healthiest and most efficient way to shop at Gelson's can be summed up in four simple words: shop around the perimeter. Before you rush out to pick up prime rib, heavy whipping cream and margarine, though, you'll want to read on to learn my expert tricks for choosing the healthiest and tastiest foods on your shopping trips to Gelson's.

For me, the most exciting area of the market in which to shop is the produce department. As tempting as it is, though, it's best to shop there last, since fruits and vegetables are delicate and can easily be bruised if placed at the bottom of your cart. Start with the heavier items, like regular deli and dairy, and then move on to the more delicate items.

Regular Deli

One of my favorite refrigerator staples is our imported Reggiano Parmesan cheese. Talk about bang for your buck – one tablespoon of grated cheese is more than enough to add flavor to your plate and it has only 20 calories and one gram of fat. Pick up a wedge for making shards of cheese with a vegetable peeler, as well as some of the freshly shredded type for quick sprinklings over soups and other hot dishes.

I also find many uses for reduced-fat crumbled feta cheese. If you enjoy making salads, a container of this cheese will disappear in no time.

Another great staple is a good, spicy, fresh salsa. Enjoy it with baked blue corn tortilla chips or stir a few spoonfuls into a mashed avocado and season with kosher salt for a fabulous guacamole.

Dairy Section

The dairy section is where you pick up your organic fat-free milk and yogurts, as well as organic eggs. Organic dairy is free of hormones, antibiotics and pesticide residues because it comes from cows that are raised without exposure to these substances. It's important to choose nonfat dairy because the fat in dairy products is mostly saturated fat, which can raise LDL (bad) cholesterol levels and increase inflammation. As an added bonus, I find that the fat-free organic milk has a richer flavor and fuller texture than conventional nonfat milk. Organic eggs are always a great high-protein staple to have in the fridge, and they are delicious when cooked with some of the vegetables you'll be picking up in a few minutes. Place the eggs in the fold-out portion of your cart so they don't get crushed by other items.

Meat and Seafood

If you eat meat, poultry or fish, I recommend that you eat a variety of fish

or seafood twice a week, as well as chicken or turkey once or twice a week, and beef, lamb, venison or pork up to three times a month, though remember that the items in this department are optional. When shopping for fish, it's most important to select a variety. Choose wild salmon over farm-raised salmon and include other fatty fish in your shopping rotation, such as tuna and black cod. Shellfish is not off limits because, although it is rich in cholesterol, it is low in saturated fat. Select organic chicken and turkey and be sure to remove the skin, which is the main source of fat and saturated fat in poultry. Organic poultry has been raised without drugs, hormones or antibiotics, has eaten 100% organic vegetarian feed its entire life and has access to the outdoors. Opt for USDA Choice cuts of Organic or All Natural beef rather than USDA Prime cuts, which are fattier. I recommend filet mignon, top round, flank, New York and the small end of the rib eye. Remember that our meat cutters will always cut just the amount you need, which is especially important if you're practicing portion control. Request four-ounce pieces of meat, fish, or chicken to yield about three ounces of cooked protein, which is one serving. Always put your fish, poultry and meat into plastic bags before you put the packages into your cart to avoid cross-contamination with any other raw foods in your basket.

Produce

Nothing is off limits in this department! Take your time here and enjoy the colors, fragrance and variety of the fruits and vegetables that Gelson's has to offer.

Choose seasonal, locally grown fruits and vegetables

We are so lucky to live in California, where most of the country's produce is grown. That means that when a food is in season, it won't have to travel very far to get to Gelson's. This ensures



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that what you are buying will taste good when you take it home. It will also save you money because you won't be paying for its transportation and you won't have to throw it away because it's past its prime, mushy or tasteless. Gelson's always indicates the point of origin on the price tags for each produce item, so you know how far your food is traveling from farm to fork, and "California-grown" is usually a good indication that an item is in season. For more help with eating in season, use my *Buying Calendar for Fresh Fruits and Vegetables* as a rough general guide to seasonal eating.

Make organic produce your first choice

New research indicates that organically grown produce has higher levels of disease-fighting antioxidants than conventionally grown crops. Although the total nutrient content of organic foods may be higher, conventionally grown foods still contain fair quantities of antioxidants. So, try to buy organically grown produce when it's available, but don't forgo a fruit or vegetable simply because it's conventionally grown—what you eat in its place almost certainly won't be as healthy. Most of the organic produce we carry is very fresh because it is grown locally, so it is in our stores within one or two days of being harvested and, therefore, still at its nutritional peak. Since organic produce cannot be forced to ripen, it is only in our stores when it is in season, so you may have to make substitutions in your recipes if what you're looking for isn't available. When high-quality organic foods are available from local growers, Ted Fujii, our produce buyer, makes them his first choice.

Try a variety of produce items

We all get stuck in food ruts, and it's particularly easy with produce because maybe you only know how to cook potatoes, broccoli and peas or you know that bananas are the most portable snack, so you only stick to what you know. I encourage you to be brave and try some new recipes or a new fruit for a snack. Since there is no nutritionally perfect food, your body needs a variety in order to acquire all of the nutrients it needs to stay healthy.

Always keep some fresh produce in the house

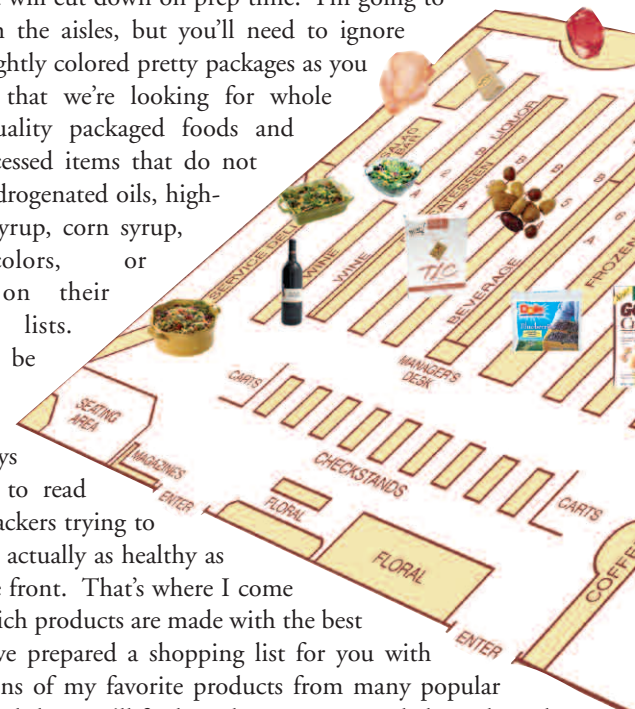
If you're hungry for a snack, a piece of fruit or some vegetables should be the first thing you reach for – if it's handy, you're more likely to eat it. Also keep in mind that you need at least five half-cup servings of vegetables and three half-cup servings of fruit a day. At least one vegetable should be dark green and at least another fruit or vegetable has to be orange. The rest can fill in the rainbow of your choice. Gelson's also offers wonderful whole grains, like quinoa and tabouleh, as well as dried mushrooms, organic tofu, organic nuts, and organic dried fruit, fresh juices, and my favorite bottled salad dressing, *Garlic Expressions*, in their produce department.

Service Deli

If you like to eat well but for whatever reason don't cook for yourself, then the Service Deli can be a lifesaver. I developed *Recipes from Jessica's Kitchen* specifically for people who were looking for healthy prepared foods that they could eat for a quick meal or snack, use to supplement a

home-cooked meal, or even use to boost their vegetable intake. There are many good choices you can make in this department in addition to any of the *Recipes from Jessica's Kitchen* items: Carving Cart turkey, Spicy Grilled Salmon, Grilled Thai Tofu, *Charlie's Pride* Organic Roast Beef, Peppered Beef Tenderloin, Gelson's Finest free-range no salt added turkey breast, Fresh Fruit Salad and Grilled Vegetables, just to name a few stand outs.

Now that we've completed our tour of the perimeter, you may have a few more steps to make before you check out. You'll need some important staples for preparing balanced meals and a few time-saving ingredients that will cut down on prep time. I'm going to steer you down the aisles, but you'll need to ignore most of the brightly colored pretty packages as you go; remember that we're looking for whole grains, high-quality packaged foods and minimally processed items that do not list partially hydrogenated oils, high-fructose corn syrup, corn syrup, artificial colors, or preservatives on their ingredient lists. Packaging can be very deceptive and you might not always have the time to read every box of crackers trying to find one that is actually as healthy as it claims on the front. That's where I come in – I know which products are made with the best ingredients. I've prepared a shopping list for you with recommendations of my favorite products from many popular categories of food that you'll find on the perimeter and along the aisles of the store.



Down the Aisles

Cereal

Keep your eye on the bottom shelf and pick up some whole-grain high-protein *Kashi Go Lean Crunch!* to go with your organic milk. You can also pick up some *Silver Palate* thick and rough oatmeal.

Chocolate

Don't pass up the candy aisle, but head straight for the chocolate — dark chocolate is rich in antioxidants. Look for high-quality bars with at least 62% cacao, though 70% is better if your taste buds will allow it. I like *Scharffen Berger* and *Green & Black's Organic* and, for pre-portioned treats, I keep *Dove* dark chocolate Promises on hand.

Pasta, rice and beans

In the next aisle, you should find pasta, rice and beans. This is where

Our registered dietitian has a Masters in Public Health. However, she is not a doctor and her nutritional recommendations are general in nature and not tailored to specific health problems. Talk to your physician or other qualified health care practitioners concerning particular health issues or before beginning any nutritional program.

you'll discover many whole-grain staples that are inexpensive and very healthful. I like *De Cecco* whole wheat pastas, *Texmati* organic brown rice, and the inexpensive dried beans, legumes and barley from *Springfield*. Minimally processed, single-variety foods like these tend to be the most inexpensive. Of course, your time is worth money as well, so canned low-sodium beans cost a little bit more, but they save a lot of time so you should do your own cost-benefit analysis. Beans are extremely healthful because they offer protein, iron, fiber and high-quality complex carbohydrates that are great for long-lasting energy and blood sugar control. A group of scientists recently examined the components of all of the healthiest native diets in the world and the one thing they all had in common was their inclusion of beans and

legumes. Always rinse canned beans in a colander to remove 30-40% of the sodium and throw out the soaking water from dried beans to help cut down on flatulence later on.

Canned fish

You may also find canned tuna and salmon in this aisle. Canned salmon is a fantastic bargain because it is usually wild and high in omega-3 fats, but is much less expensive than fresh wild salmon. Canned tuna is also a great inexpensive source of high-quality protein. I recommend light tuna, which is lower in mercury, and tuna packed in olive oil, which is high in healthful fats and makes fantastic tuna salad without the mayonnaise.

Canned soup

In the canned soup aisle, you'll find one of my favorite convenience items: canned broth. This is a lifesaver when making soups, sauces, risotto and when reheating cooked chicken. Make your choices based on sodium content, because you can always add salt to a dish yourself. I like chicken and vegetable broths from *Health Valley* and *Pacific Natural Foods*.

Crackers

It's always nice to have a good cracker around, but you have to be careful to avoid those partially hydrogenated oils that so many of them contain. You'll also want to go for whole grains. In my opinion, the best-tasting crackers are also the healthiest. *Kashi TLC* original 7-grain crackers and *Ak-Mak* 100% whole wheat crackers are always a hit. Looking for graham crackers? Pick up the *Mi-Del* variety made with whole grains and no trans fats. For raw, unsalted nuts that are excellent for salads, baking

and snacking, pick up *Flanigan Farms* natural nuts in this aisle, too.

Condiments

You will find one of your most important staples in this aisle: olive oil. This is no time to bargain hunt. I strongly recommend organic olive oil and organic versions of any oil or fat, for that matter. Pesticide residues tend to have a presence in conventionally grown food and, since pesticides are fat soluble (meaning they travel in fat), I believe it is best to use oils made from plants that were grown without pesticides. I love the flavor of *Napa Valley* organic olive oil and use it for cooking and making salad dressings. Olive oil has many health benefits and should be the main source of fat in your diet and the primary oil you use for cooking. You should also choose a variety of vinegars to keep on hand for making salad dressings. An assortment of mustards can be found here, too, along with organic ketchup.

Frozen foods

This section can be a boon for busy people. However, you need to be very selective when picking your frozen foods because sodium, fat and preservatives abound here. Generally, frozen fruit and vegetables are a great purchase, because you can find them without added salt or sugar. For frozen meals, *Amy's* seems to put the most thought into their ingredients and recipes. *Lean Cuisine* Spa Cuisine Classics has the right idea by using whole grains and including at least half a cup of vegetables in each meal. Vegetarian main dish items from *Cedar Lane* and *Morningstar Farms* could work in a pinch, too.

Bread

It's always handy to have a loaf in the freezer, even if you don't eat it regularly. It's important to look for whole-grain breads with a relatively short list of ingredients. The first ingredient should be something whole, like "whole wheat flour," not just "unbleached wheat flour." You need to read labels carefully, because even the best brands make varieties of breads that don't meet my standards.

Beverages

If you don't have a good water filtration system at home, then pick up some bottled water. It should be the primary beverage you drink throughout the day. If you like, a small amount of red wine is also a nice complement to food and it is a heart-healthy component of a Mediterranean-style diet.

I'm sorry if reading this took longer than it usually takes you to shop! However, now that you know what to look for, your shopping should be quicker and more streamlined. I've also created your master shopping list for you, so you can make copies and use it to take the guesswork out of your trips to Gelson's. If there is a category that I have not addressed and you would like a recommendation, feel free to call me at 1-800-GELSONS, and for nearly 300 delicious healthy recipes to use with your new healthy foods, check out my recipes at www.gelsons.com.



Chocolate Milk for Champs

Research Update

Ever wondered what the best post-exercise beverage is? Recent research brings to light what many athletes, coaches and sports nutritionists already knew: chocolate milk is the best drink for helping your body recover post-workout.

The study followed nine elite cyclists through strenuous workouts on three occasions. They were given chocolate milk, Gatorade and Endurox R4 (the latter two are specially formulated sports drinks) on different occasions. The cyclists could cycle 50% longer when they drank chocolate milk versus Endurox R4 and equally as long when they compared the chocolate milk with Gatorade. Chocolate milk not only contains electrolytes and calcium but also a great balance of protein and carbohydrates that are important for refueling and repairing muscles.

This is great news for parents with active children since Gatorade contains artificial colors and flavors, which I don't recommend for children or adults, and chocolate milk does not. It's also great news for athletic adults, since I often get asked about what is best to eat or drink after a workout. One caution, though: chocolate milk does have more calories than Gatorade, so if controlling calories is a concern, stick to an 8-ounce serving of chocolate milk and even make it yourself using my recipe for Chocolate Milk, a Kid-Friendly Recipe. As always, look for organic milk, and fat free is preferable.

Eggs

Eggs symbolize rebirth, springtime and the cycle of life, which is why we eat them for both of April's major holidays, Easter and Passover. In addition to their symbolic significance, eggs are the gold standard for protein, as well as a good source of iron, folate, vitamin E, riboflavin and vitamin B12.

A large egg contains just 75 calories, 6 grams of excellent quality protein, 5 grams of fat, just 1.5 grams of saturated fat and 210 milligrams of cholesterol. Is their cholesterol a big deal? Not as big as it used to be, since we now know that saturated fat and trans fat affect blood cholesterol more than dietary cholesterol, and eggs contain only a small amount of saturated fat and no trans fats. Furthermore, the cholesterol in eggs is about 25% lower than we originally thought. Current dietary guidelines recommend keeping dietary cholesterol under 300 milligrams on most days, especially for people with high cholesterol. If you find that you have two or three whole eggs one day, then don't have any for the next three or four days. However, egg whites can be used freely, since they contain no fat or cholesterol—just protein. New research indicates that eating one whole egg a day does not affect heart disease risk (possibly due to eggs' heart-healthy B vitamins and antioxidants), but the USDA and the American Heart Association still recommend more moderate consumption. There are also varieties of eggs from *Eggland's Best* and *Healthy Horizons* that contain four grams of fat, one gram of saturated fat, and 180 milligrams of cholesterol because their chickens are fed a special vegetarian diet that is supplemented with omega 3 fatty acids and vitamin E. Organic eggs from *Horizon Organic* come from chickens that have not been given hormones, antibiotics, or pesticides and their feed is 100% vegetarian and organic.

The only difference between a brown egg and a white egg is the breed of chicken that laid it. When selecting a brand, color, or size of eggs, open the carton and gently jiggle each egg to make sure it has no cracks and it isn't stuck to the bottom of the carton (a sure sign of a leaky egg). Take them home right away and store them in the coldest part of the fridge—never in the door, since they're repeatedly exposed to warm air when the door is opened. Eggs can be stored for four or five weeks, but if you're wondering whether your eggs are fresh, submerge the egg in cold water. A fresh egg will sink. If it floats, it's too old to use. If you're cooking with eggs, you need at least two bowls—one to crack the egg into so you can check for any discoloration, blood, or odor, the second to transfer the acceptable eggs into. Use three bowls if you're separating the yolks from the whites. Patience and low heat are essential for producing tender fried or scrambled eggs, since high heat produces tough, watery eggs. Additionally, for more tender scrambled eggs, add just a little water or milk to help tenderize the eggs even more. This month, try my recipe for Matzo Brei.

Jessica's April Store Appearances: Body Fat Testing*

Jessica will be offering complimentary body fat testing and answering your questions about weight loss, food, and nutrition.

Encino
Tuesday April 18, Noon

Pasadena
Thursday April 20, Noon

Westlake Village
Monday April 24, Noon

Calabasas
Monday April 24, 4:00 pm

Valley Village / North Hollywood
Tuesday April 25, Noon

West Hollywood
Friday April 28, Noon

*Testing method is Bioelectrical Impedence and is not appropriate for people with pacemakers or osteoporosis, pregnant women or children. Be well-hydrated for most accurate results.

CALABASAS 818-906-6228	ENCINO 818-906-5780	NEWPORT BEACH 949-644-8660	PASADENA 626-535-0190	SILVER LAKE/LOS FELIZ 323-660-0387	WEST HOLLYWOOD 323-656-5580
CENTURY CITY 310-277-4288	IRVINE 949-551-6093	NORTHRIDGE 818-377-4133	SANTA BARBARA 805-687-5810	TARZANA 818-906-5752	WESTLAKE VILLAGE 805-496-0353
DANA POINT 949-488-8147	MARINA DEL REY 310-306-2952	PACIFIC PALISADES 310-459-4483	SHERMAN OAKS 818-377-4140	VALLEY VILLAGE / NORTH HOLLYWOOD 818-906-5743	MAYFAIR HOLLYWOOD 323-464-7316