

# Healthy



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## FRIDGE, FREEZER AND PANTRY

Stocking your refrigerator, freezer and pantry with healthy foods creates the right environment for healthy food choices and eating habits.

But with all the unhealthy foods that fill the shelves at the grocery store, it can be a difficult task. Let's look at ways to stock a healthy refrigerator, freezer, and pantry to help you eat for optimal health!

### STOCKING YOUR REFRIGERATOR

For optimal health, keep organic, local foods in your fridge as much as possible. Stock your fridge with healthy, high-fiber options such as fixings for salads. Choose one or two days a week to wash and cut fruit and veggies and store in the fridge for quick and easy snacks and salads. Do a weekly purge to get rid of any expired food you may have. Condiments should take up very little space in your fridge, and buying seasonal foods will reduce your grocery bill. Here are some healthy foods to keep in your fridge: Organic eggs and butter (pastured is best if possible), kale (great for easy kale chip snacks or for a delicious salad), celery (with cream cheese for a nutritious snack), hummus (great for dipping cauliflower, broccoli, carrots, and other veggies), berries (mix in plain yogurt, add to cereals, and smoothies), organic ground flaxseed (an easy way to get more healthy omega-3's and fiber into your diet; add to yogurt, steel-cut oatmeal, rice cereal, and smoothies).

### STOCKING YOUR FREEZER

Freeze food into snack and meal-sized portions so it's more convenient. If you have infants, keep pureed veggies and fruits in ice cube trays for convenient feeding (just thaw in hot water before mealtime). Don't toss those over-ripe bananas out! Peel and store in the freezer for use in smoothies or homemade breads. Organic frozen veggies and fruits/berries are a healthy, often times less-expensive choice. Freezing is done at the peak of ripeness when they're most nutrient-dense. Avocados are super healthy, but often very expensive (especially when out of season). Buy bulk when they are priced right (or on sale!), peel and freeze to use later for guacamole or spreads.

Frozen grapes make a delicious, fun snack. Wash, dry and store in a glass container.

### FREEZER STORAGE SERVICES

Keeping foods frozen longer doesn't pose any safety concerns, but it will affect taste. Here are some general guidelines:

- Cooked chicken: four to six months
- Fatty fish: two to three months
- Lean fish: up to six months
- Cooked meat: two to three months
- Fruits and vegetables: six to eight months
- Try fresh preserving your own foods (such as fruits, jams, pickles, sauerkraut, tomato sauce), and store in mason jars (fridge or freezer).
- Avoid freezing foods in plastics (including plastic wrap) to prevent BPA contamination.
- Foods covered in ice crystals are "freezer-burnt" and should be discarded.
- Avoid stocking your freezer with prepackaged frozen foods/meals (i.e. Healthy Choice). These foods typically contain loads of preservatives and " Frankenfood" ingredients.
- Avoid stocking your freezer with store-bought desserts. Try making your own ice cream, it's fun and easy!

### STOCKING YOUR PANTRY

Avoid stocking your pantry with processed convenience foods. Keeping foundation meal essentials handy makes it easy to create balanced, healthy meals.

### WHAT ARE FOUNDATION MEALS?

Foundation meals are themes that you can use to build many different balanced meals that can become the framework for your daily diet.

Themes include:

- Bean and grain meal
- Grain and veggie meal
- Salad as a meal
- Protein and veggie meal

### WHY ARE FOUNDATION MEALS BENEFICIAL?

- You combine common foods in certain proportions to yield balanced, tasteful meals.
- It simplifies meal planning.
- Foundation meals are nutrient dense.
- Helps reduce cravings.
- Balances protein, fat, and complex carbohydrates with fiber.

### LET'S LOOK AT SOME OF THE FOODS THAT MAKE UP A HEALTHY PANTRY:

- Brown rice
- Quinoa
- Steel cut oatmeal
- Homemade granola
- Onions
- Garlic
- Dried beans
- Lentils
- Extra virgin olive oil
- Coconut oil
- Wild-caught canned sardines
- Nuts & seeds

Another healthy pantry tip: Take foods out of plastic or boxed containers and store in glass jars/containers to avoid BPA and other chemicals found in packaging. Look at your neighborhood hardware store, or online for cheaper, bulk prices.

Create a kitchen that inspires good health. Make it convenient to eat nutritious by keeping healthy items in your pantry, refrigerator and freezer.

Your body will thank you!