

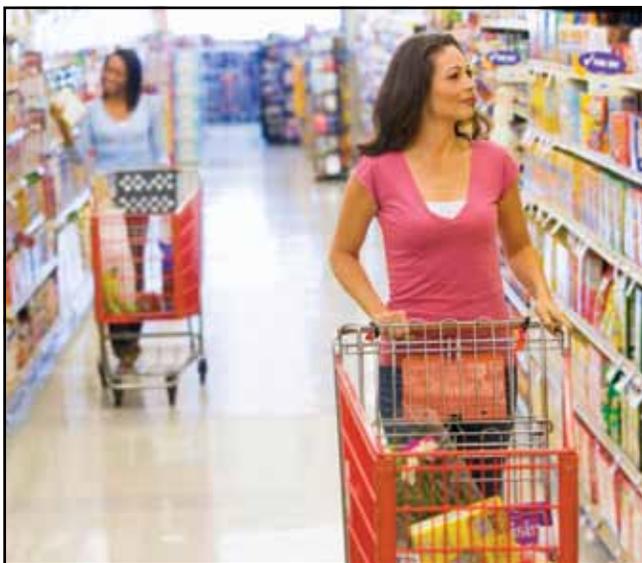
## Smart Grocery Shopping Simple Changes Can Help Improve Your Health

By the Kroger pharmacy team

**O**besity continues to be a growing trend in the United States. In 2010, the obesity rate in Indiana was 29.6%. There was not a single state in the country that had a rate less than 20% last year.

According to an article in the *Annual Review of Public Health*, research indicates that diet plays a large role in preventing chronic diseases as well as obesity. The food choices we make each day can greatly impact our overall health and wellness. Kroger is among the excellent places to shop for healthier options due to our outstanding perishable selection as well as an enormous variety of healthy options in our center store offerings.

The key to a healthy diet begins at the grocery store. On average, households make two visits to the grocery store per week. There are many simple ways to alter your shopping habits that can lead to major changes in your current lifestyle and eating behaviors. One of the most essential shopping practices to implement is to shop the perimeter of the store, which contains the healthiest foods. This includes fresh fruits and vegetables, dairy products, fish, poultry, whole grains, and various supplements and vitamins in the pharmacy.



Additionally, there are nutritious options in the center of the store such as frozen vegetables, organic foods as well as a variety of other healthy options. The key to healthy shopping in the center of the store is reading food labels and making smart purchases. Avoid trans fats, saturated fats, processed sugars and high sodium-containing foods.

Another important habit to improve your food choices is to make a grocery list and stick to it. You are less likely to impulsively buy unhealthy foods when following a pre-planned shopping list. A few choices to include are:

- whole grain breads and pastas;
- fat-free or low-fat dairy products;
- lean meats;
- low-fat or fat-free salad dressings;
- fresh fruits and vegetables (conventional and organic); and
- vegetable oils.

### Cooking up easy, healthy alternatives

Americans are now eating out more often, therefore consuming larger food portions that contain greater amounts of saturated fat with less fiber, calcium and iron. On average, Americans consume about 32% of their calories from foods not prepared at home. It is easy to obtain a healthier diet by making some simple changes during your work day, such as packing a lunch from home. The following tips for making healthier meal options can be used throughout the week:

- Cook one main course recipe that can be utilized for multiple meals
- Utilize the freezer for ready-made meals that just need to be heated
- Chop vegetables when you arrive home from the grocery store to save time during the week

In addition, Kroger provides numerous healthy recipes on its web site for some new ideas.

One of the major contributing factors to eating out is the busy American lifestyle. Americans tend to look for cheap and quick food options for lack of time instead of considering their health. If you enjoy eating at work, you may want to stock some healthy snack options. The CDC suggests a variety of easy on-the-go meals, such as:

- “grab-and-go” fruits (apples, oranges, bananas, canned fruit without added sugars and raisins);
- washed and chopped fresh vegetables (celery, carrots and cucumbers);
- low-fat and fat-free milk products (yogurt without added sugars, milk and low-fat cheeses);
- whole-grain crackers and breads; and
- protein choices (low-fat deli turkey slices or almonds and other nuts and seeds).

Most importantly, the greatest factor in a healthier diet is you. If you have a strong desire and dedication to lifestyle changes discussed in this article, you will be on your way to a healthier you! For more information on a healthy lifestyle, visit the Center for Disease Control web site – [www.choosemyplate.gov](http://www.choosemyplate.gov).

#### INFORMATION LINK

**Author:** Kroger is one of the nation’s largest grocery retailers, with more than 2,400 stores in 31 states. The company has been an Indiana Chamber member since 1934. Learn more at [www.thekrogerco.com](http://www.thekrogerco.com)