

→ GROCERY STORE GUIDE

MACON COUNTY HEALTH
DEPARTMENT



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

Macon County Health
Department



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The story behind

GROCERY STORE GUIDE



The Macon County Health Department chose a focus area for their 2022-2026 Maternal/Child Health program to reduce childhood obesity through encouraging healthy eating and physical activity.

At the Macon County Health Department, we strive every day to prevent, promote, and protect the health of all Macon County residents to help your family get healthy and stay healthy. Health starts at home; we are here to support and encourage your family in building healthy habits and to help children grow into healthy adults.

Kids eat every 2-3 hours, which can be up to 3 meals and 1-2 snacks a day, that can be a lot of food to prepare. Sometimes those meals and snacks happen outside the home at restaurants, work, and school, but a lot of the food we eat is bought and prepared at home. It can be hard work to constantly be preparing meals and snacks, but knowing how to navigate the grocery store can help make feeding your family a little easier. Here's your guide to help navigate the grocery store by planning ahead, making smart shopping decisions, and storing your food correctly once you get home to reduce waste.

BEFORE YOU GO

Plan ahead before heading to the store

Let your kids help with meal and snack plans. Give everyone a day of the week or each person gets a special week to help meal plan. Getting kids involved may help them be more excited about what you serve and have in the house to eat.

MAKING A PLAN CAN HELP REDUCE FOOD WASTE BY BUILDING MEALS AROUND WHAT YOU ALREADY HAVE, WHAT PLANS YOU HAVE THAT WEEK, AND HELP YOU SAVE MONEY BY NOT OVERBUYING

- **Look to see what you have.** Check the pantry, fridge, and freezer to see what you already have and could make a meal out of. If you already have spaghetti noodles, you just need some sauce to make a meal. If you have a dozen eggs left in the fridge, you could have breakfast for dinner. If there are some baby carrots you got last week to eat for a snack, you could plan on roasting them for a side dish this week.
- **Make a plan.** Make a menu to help know what you're going to eat throughout the week. This can be loosely structured with 4-5 meals to make, or, very structured assigning a meal to each day - whatever best fits your lifestyle. This will help avoid the last-minute scramble to know what to make and ensure you have the ingredients for your favorite meals. Also, this will help you buy only what you need, which helps prevent wasting uneaten food.
- **Don't forget about breakfast, lunch, and snacks!** Whether your kids eat breakfast and lunch at home or school will depend on each family. If you are in charge of those meals, make sure you also plan them. It's not necessary to make something homemade every day if that doesn't fit your lifestyle, but having 2-3 things you can rotate will make the morning rush much easier.
- **Get the family involved.** Have your family help decide what kind of meals and snacks they would like. This can help give shopping and cooking ideas of what to make and what kind of foods the family would like to have.
- **Keep an ongoing list.** Have a central place to make a list when you run out of something or think of what you need from the grocery store to help prevent forgetting what you need. If someone uses the last of the salad dressing, have them write it down, this helps share the responsibility to know what is needed. This could be on a designated pad of paper, on your phone, or using a smart-home device like an Amazon Alexa or Google Home.



MAKE A SHOPPING LIST

Making a shopping list can help ensure you get the food you need - there's nothing worse than forgetting one item at the store and having to go back.

Making a list can also help you avoid buying food you don't need, won't eat, or is outside your budget.

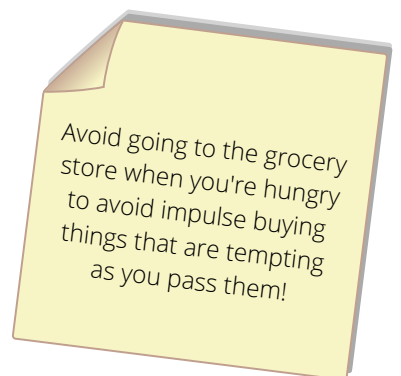
You can use local ads and grocery store apps to see what is on sale and clip coupons.

Look at what you have in your pantry, refrigerator, and freezer to see what you need to replenish and what items you already have.

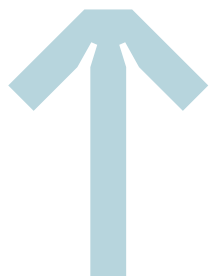
Ask for suggestions from other family members as to what they may want from the store.

ORGANIZATION

How you organize your shopping list will depend on where and how you like to shop. It's helpful to organize by aisle or department so you aren't running around the store, but instead, going with the flow of the store. This can help make shopping quick and easy, especially if you are shopping with children. Every store is different, but generally, the perimeter and outside aisles of the store has produce, meat, dairy/eggs, and frozen items. The inside aisles have pantry staples, organized into categories.



MAKE A SHOPPING LIST



When you bring your kids to the grocery store, they love to help by adding things to the cart. Make it a game such as "grab the yellow box" or "pick a green vegetable." This helps them participate in the shopping and planning, but also can help prevent them from adding random items to the cart. Check out the game on the last page!

NAVIGATING THE STORE

SHOP SMART

- **Shop the outside aisles.** Traditionally, the perimeter contains fresh fruits & vegetables, meat, and dairy/eggs, which are the least processed options. The inside aisles contain healthy ingredients as well, so don't be afraid to shop smart in the aisles for whole grains, iron-rich cereals, canned options, and fiber-rich beans.
- **Look up and down.** Products marketed specifically to kids and the most expensive items are typically in the middle of the shelf at our eye level. Look up and down on the shelf for similar items that might cost less.
- **Compare store brands and name brands.** Sometimes there's not much of a difference between store brands and name brands. This can be based on your preference or dietary needs.
- **Shop at multiple stores.** If you have the availability to, sometimes shopping at multiple stores can help save money since products may cost different prices at different stores.
- **Read the labels.** Look for foods that help you reach your health goals. Nutrition labels changed to make them easier to read in the past few years and bring our attention to what matters most, things like serving size, calories, added sugars, and iron. When a value is 20% or more on a nutrition label, we consider it high; look for foods high in fiber. When a value is 5% or less on a nutrition label, we consider it low; you want low in saturated fat, sodium, and cholesterol.
- **Compare unit prices.** If you have food you frequently buy, you can look at the unit price on the shelf. This price tells you that the total package may be higher when purchasing, but each item in the package costs less since you're buying more at one time.
- **Shop sales.** Check your store's local ad, app, or online sales before you go shopping to see what is on sale. This can be the best way to get some of your favorites for a little bit less money.
- **Stick to your list.** It's easy to be tempted when something sounds good as you're going through the aisles, but sticking to your list can help you stay on budget and avoid food waste by buying more than you need.
- **Buy fruits and vegetables that are in season.** This will ensure they are the freshest and will cost the least if you buy them in season. This can also help widen the variety of foods you eat that may not be available in canned or frozen.
- **Buy canned, fresh, or frozen – whatever is in your budget.** Eating fruits and vegetables is the most important part, so buy what is in your budget. If you opt for canned, choose vegetables that are low-sodium, if available, and fruit in 100% fruit juice. Frozen fruits and vegetables are frozen right after harvest so are healthy choices as well!



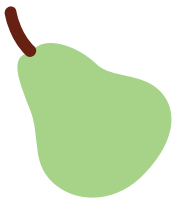
SPRING

Apples	Kale
Apricots	Kiwi
Asparagus	Lemons
Avocados	Lettuce
Bananas	Mushrooms
Broccoli	Peas
Cabbage	Pineapple
Carrots	Spinach
Celery	Strawberries
Garlic	Turnips



SUMMER

Apples	Eggplant
Apricots	Garlic
Avocados	Green Beans
Bananas	Honeydew
Beets	Lemons
Bell Peppers	Limes
Blackberries	Mangoes
Blueberries	Peaches
Cantaloupe	Plums
Carrots	Raspberries
Celery	Tomatoes
Cherries	Watermelon
Corn	Zucchini
Cucumbers	

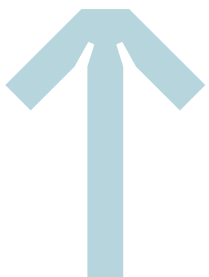


FALL

Apples	Lettuce
Bananas	Limes
Beets	Mangos
Bell Peppers	Mushrooms
Broccoli	Onions
Brussels Sprouts	Pears
Cabbage	Peas
Carrots	Pineapples
Cauliflower	Potatoes
Celery	Pumpkins
Collard Greens	Radishes
Cranberries	Raspberries
Garlic	Spinach
Ginger	Sweet Potatoes
Grapes	Turnips
Green Beans	Winter Squash
Kale	
Kiwi	
Lemons	

WINTER

Apples	Leeks
Avocados	Lemons
Bananas	Limes
Beets	Onions
Brussels Sprouts	Parsnips
Cabbage	Pears
Carrots	Pineapple
Celery	Potatoes
Collard Greens	Winter Squash
Grapefruit	
Kale	
Kiwi	



FRUITS & VEGETABLES BY SEASON

STORING YOUR FOOD TO MAKE IT LAST LONGER

- Cut up your fruit and vegetables right when you get home. Store them in containers or plastic/resuable bags. You are more likely to eat them when they are ready to eat, rather than having to prepare them each time you want to eat them.
- Wrap the top of your bunch of bananas with plastic wrap to slow the release of ethylene gas, which will make other fruit in the same proximity ripen faster.
- Store asparagus in a glass standing up with a small amount of water.
- Take your greens out of the bag and put them in a Tupperware container with a paper towel on top. Store upside down (so the paper towel is on the bottom). Change the paper towel when it starts to get damp.
- Keep avocados on the counter until they are ripe, and then store in a jar completely submerged in water until ready to eat.
- Put baby carrots in plastic bags or containers so they are quick to grab and go for a snack.
- Put older food in front so you use it first before the expiration date.



ENCOURAGING HEALTHY EATING WITH YOUR FAMILY

TRY SOME TIPS TO SERVE HEALTHY MEALS AND SNACKS TO ENCOURAGE HEALTHY EATING



- **Have everyone eat the same thing at meal time.** Whatever the make-up of your family mealtime looks like, have everyone sit down and eat the same thing. Kids look to the adults and older siblings in their lives as role models when it comes to the foods they choose to eat. Having the adults in the household eating the same foods as the kids, at the same time, can help increase acceptance. If broccoli isn't your favorite vegetable, that's okay, but put it on your plate and model good mealtime behavior.
- **Only positive talk at the table.** Don't talk negatively about the food served, even if it's something you don't like. Talk about the trait of the food, like "these cooked carrots are soft and I like crunchy, raw carrots." Or simply don't say anything at all so kids don't get the wrong impression of the food.
- **Take the pressure off eating.** Especially with a selective eater, the more you push, the more they will resist. So take the pressure off, simply giving them their plate, and not commenting on the food or how much they eat. Talk about their day or what they are looking forward to for the weekend.
- **Try something new.** Encourage your family to try a new fruit or vegetable or try something you love prepared a new way once per month. Try a new recipe outside your normal culture to experiment with new flavors and cooking styles. You would be surprised by the things you like. If you have a selective eater, put a small serving (even as small as one bite) on their plate to help a new food be less intimidating.
- **Eat the Rainbow.** Eat and serve a wide variety of colors of fruits and vegetables. Every color has different health benefits, such as blue and purple fruits and vegetables are good for your brain health, while red fruits and vegetables help with heart health.
- **Serve healthy snacks that keep them full.** Prioritizing produce and protein at snack time can help keep you full in between meals.
 - Graham crackers + peanut butter + sliced bananas
 - Whole wheat toast + smashed avocado
 - Hard-boiled eggs + apple
 - Yogurt + berries
 - Veggies + pita bread + hummus
 - Mini whole grain bagel + cottage cheese + pineapple
 - Orange + turkey slices
 - Crackers + cubed ham + grapes
 - Clementine + whole-grain frozen waffle + cream cheese
 - Fruit smoothie: fruit + milk of choice + yogurt

If you have younger kids, print out some pictures of snack ideas using clip art or google images, then you can show them the options to choose from and have them point so they can help understand which snack they are choosing.

RESOURCES

Use these resources to help plan and make your shopping trip a success. You are welcome to copy these files as needed or download and print them from our website at www.maconmohealth.org/forms

WEEKLY MENU

MONDAY

TUESDAY

WEDNESDAY

THURSDAY

FRIDAY

SATURDAY

SUNDAY

SHOPPING LIST



PRODUCE



BEVERAGES



DAIRY/EGGS



FROZEN ITEMS



PANTRY



MEAT



OTHER

KIDS GROCERY STORE SCAVENGER HUNT

Having your kids point out each one of these items at the store can help keep them interested in the shopping trip, can help build a discussion for new and different foods, and can help your kids learn about the grocery store.

You can modify the game to best match your child's age

	Aisle	Item	Price
Red Fruit			
Orange Drink			
Yellow Package			
Green Vegetable			
Blue Box			
Anything Purple			



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