



THE
WHOLE BODY
Healthy
SHOPPING GUIDE



SIX TIME BEST SELLING AUTHOR
LIZ SWANN MILLER



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The Whole Body Healthy Shopping Guide

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Introduction

Welcome to the Whole Body Healthy Shopping Guide! This is a complete guide to the foods that lead to optimal health and well-being. Along the way, you'll learn more about products that cause unwanted weight gain, and you might find yourself surprised to discover that many of them are labeled with terms like "healthy," "diet," "all-natural," and "low-fat."

While wellness is about much more than just diet, eating the right way makes it so much easier to develop a dynamic plan for continuously improving everything about your life! When you eat well, your energy will skyrocket. You will enjoy better, more stable moods, and you may find that your entire outlook on life changes, becoming more positive. People will wonder what happened to make you change, and they'll be excited to spend time with you!

Are you ready? Armed with the information in this guide, you'll discover what to eat, what to avoid, which foods improve your health, and which ones make you feel downright miserable. You'll spend less on food, and your waistline will become slimmer, naturally.

This guide is much more than a simple list. You'll be amazed at what you discover inside.



CHAPTER 1:

These Foods are Toxic...And Many Are Making You Fat!

If you are overweight, as so many people are these days, don't point a finger at the mirror and assign blame to yourself. Yes, you're ultimately the one who is in charge of what goes into your mouth, but the food industry has been selling the public a bill of goods that has us convinced that "diet" foods are good for us when, in fact, they put us into a toxic state. Did you know that the majority of "diet" foods that contain fruits and vegetables (think breakfast cereal, snack bars, puffed, processed veggie snacks, and other so-called healthy items) often have added sugar or artificial sweetener in them? In just a moment you'll learn how these contribute to toxicity and contribute to obesity.

Toxic foods aren't poison in the sense that they will kill us immediately when ingested, but they put our bodies into a tailspin that leads to out of control eating, leading to obesity that in turn increases our risk for heart disease and stroke. If your daily diet is full of junk such as processed meats, fried foods, and soda (especially the diet kind!) then you are on the straight and narrow path toward an unhealthy end.

Luckily, the body often heals itself perfectly when treated to a pure, clean diet, and when you cut the junk and begin feeding yourself on a cellular level, your health takes a near-immediate turn for the better.

So...What are these foods that are making you fat, and why is this happening?

Processed Meats

Despite what food producers want you to believe, things like lunchmeat, bacon, and sausage are far from healthy. They are filled with preservatives, the worst kinds of fat imaginable, and often, they contain added sugar and fillers. To add insult to injury, many of these products also contain nasty bits of "meat" that come from some of the grossest animal parts imaginable. Rectum, anyone?

Not surprisingly, studies show that people who frequently consume processed meats are at high risk for developing serious illnesses. A study published in *BMC Medicine* dis-

covered a strong link between the consumption of processed meat and the development of cancer and heart disease. This study involved half a million men and women from 10 countries. Known as the EPIC (European Prospective Investigation into Cancer and Nutrition) Study, it showed that a person's risk of premature death increased as the amount of processed meat in the diet went up. 1 Another study, this time published in the journal *Nutrition and Cancer*, backed up these findings, with scientists concluding that exposure to nitrates, nitrites, and other chemicals in processed meats led to an increase in colorectal cancer. 2 The treatment for this disease can be stressful and painful. While many colorectal cancer survivors go on to lead full lives, almost all are subject to procedures such as colostomies or ileostomies, meaning that waste that used to be deposited into the toilet is instead directed to a bag attached to the survivor, and that bag must be emptied on a regular basis. The increased risk for this disease and its unpleasant ramifications may just be enough to convince you to give up bacon, lunchmeat, and other toxin-filled processed meats.

Alternatives: Cook fresh meats such as lean beef or chicken, and slice them very thinly to make your own cold cuts.

1 <http://www.biomedcentral.com/bmcmed/>

2 <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3584417/>

Soda

Have you heard the news about soda? You may know that drinking this beverage is like drinking liquid sugar, and if you've been watching your weight, you may have stopped drinking sweetened soft drinks. In case you haven't done this, here's why you should stop: Sugary soda contains brominated vegetable oil (BVO), which is linked to skin conditions, memory loss, and nerve disorders. This ingredient is also found in certain types of plastics, where it acts as a flame retardant. The sugar in these sodas – even when they're sweetened with cane sugar instead of high-fructose corn syrup (HFCS) causes your insulin level to spike, adding to your body's toxic load and causing you to crave even more sugar. As if that weren't enough, it also contributes to tooth decay and all those empty calories translate to weight gain.

Alternatives: Drink water or herbal tea. Try to avoid beverages with caffeine; red rooibos tea is a tasty one to try, and it's great for your body. If you're craving fizziness, go for some carbonated water, perhaps with organic fruit essence added.

Diet Soda

Chemical companies have done a fantastic job of convincing people that artificial sweeteners are harmless. The American Food and Drug Administration (FDA) calls these non-nutritive sweeteners safe to eat, even though evidence is mounting against them. Aspartame, neotame, saccharine, sucralose, and acesulfame potassium (acesulfame K) contain little to no calories, but they may increase your risk of suffering from metabolic syndrome, cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes, and even weight gain!³ Some natural sodas contain Stevia instead, and if you can find them, feel free to indulge in them occasionally. I'll be introducing you to Stevia in the "What to Eat" chapter.

Alternatives: Drink water or herbal tea. You can also create healthy infused waters by placing fruits, herbs, and even vegetables such as cucumber in water for a few hours. The flavors are light, fresh, and delicious!

Mercury-Dense Fish Species

Thanks to polluted oceans, an increasing number of fish species are off the menu despite their protein content, low saturated fat levels, and high omega-3 fatty acid levels. Swordfish, marlin, king mackerel, shark, orange roughy, and tilefish are highest in mercury. Albacore tuna is often

³ <http://www.medicaldaily.com/4-dangerous-effects-artificial-sweeteners-your-health-247543>

contaminated, and even canned light tuna can contain some mercury. While tuna is OK to eat on an occasional basis, it contains more mercury than most shellfish and mid-food chain fish species. Mercury is a neurotoxin, and if you are pregnant or nursing you should know that the EPA and FDA recommend abstaining from fish that contain it in high levels since it can harm your child's developing brain and nervous system.

Alternatives: Wild-caught salmon or trout makes a good alternative to these fish. Cod, halibut, flounder, haddock, sole, and perch are some of the fish with the lowest mercury content.

Refined White Flour

Not only does refined white flour and goods that are made with it contain lots of gluten, which is addictive, these foods also contribute to weight gain, Type 2 diabetes, and heart disease. This is because refined white flour and products made with it are digested quickly and rapidly turn to sugar that enters your bloodstream and causes insulin levels to spike.

Alternatives: You don't have to give up on baked goods; in fact, thanks to increased awareness about the problems gluten can cause, excellent alternatives to white flour are available. Coconut flour, almond flour, rice flour, spelt flour, and oat flour are a few examples.

Margarine

Not all margarine is bad, and conducting a bit of research while shopping can help you choose a brand that won't harm your health. In general though, buttery spreads that can stand on their own contain saturated fats, which raise your bad (LDL) cholesterol level, lead to a rapidly expanding waistline, and increase the risk of heart disease and stroke. Some brands also contain partially hydrogenated oils (trans fats), which are so dangerous that they're now regulated by the FDA.

Alternatives: There are several brands of margarine based on olive oil and other healthy fats. Earth Balance is an excellent one to try.

Deep-Fried Foods

As much as you may love your French fries and other deep-fat fried goodies, I'm asking you to consider giving them up (or at least seriously limiting them to a few special occasions each year!) Besides the high fat content found in these foods, the fact that they are cooked at such high temperatures also poses a risk. Deep-fat frying can cause foods to form toxic chemical compounds inside their structures, which in turn can lead to an increased risk in stroke and several types of cancer. Men who eat fried foods once per week or more often than that increase their risk of devel-

oping prostate cancer by up to 37 percent.⁴ High-temperature cooking, including deep fat frying can also cause foods to develop advanced glycation endproducts (AGEs), which are linked to oxidative stress and chronic inflammation, both of which increase the risk of disease development.

Alternatives: If you must have fries once in a while, cut thin strips of potato or sweet potato. Toss them with a little extra-virgin olive oil and bake them in the oven until they are crisp. Sprinkle with a little bit of sea salt, fresh herbs, or hot spices.

Dried Fruit

While some dried fruits are clean and healthy, many contain added sugar and stabilizers. Additionally, dried fruit has much more sugar than fresh fruit does, so even though you think you're eating healthily, you could be causing your insulin levels to spike. Eating a cup of dried fruit such as papaya exposes you to *more* sugar than what's in an entire candy bar!

It's easy to overeat dried fruit. Why? Because fructose doesn't send a signal to your brain when you've had enough. It does nothing to suppress ghrelin, which is a hormone that makes you hungry, nor does it stimulate leptin, which is the hormone that stops you from feeling hungry.

⁴ <http://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/255582.php>

Worse yet, dried fruit can contribute to toxicity, as the act of breaking down fructose causes the body to produce high amounts of toxins and waste products. Additionally, the process increases blood sugar.

If you eat dried fruit on occasion, choose the organic kind and be sure to eat it in moderation, along with some protein.

Alternatives: Have a piece of fresh fruit instead, or enjoy some cut-up vegetables.

Cows' Milk and Products Derived From It

Milk...Does it really do your body any good? Despite what the dairy industry wants you to believe, the fact remains that human beings are not built to digest cow's milk or anything derived from it. Additionally, most of the milk found in stores comes from factory-farmed cows that live in filthy environments. These cattle are fed a steady stream of bio-engineered hormones that increase milk production, antibiotics to help prevent infections (did you know that 55% of all antibiotics used in the United States are fed to livestock?), and toxic herbicides and pesticides that contaminate the genetically modified food they eat.

While the biochemical makeup of cow's milk is ideal for transforming a cute 65-pound calf into a 400-pound bull-

ock over the space of one year, it's not good for humans! Studies show that milk and other foods sourced from animals make the blood acidic. When this happens, your bones leach calcium to make up for it, setting you up for osteoporosis later in life. If your argument for drinking milk and eating dairy products is that these contain calcium, you've been sold a bill of goods. The only research that suggests that dairy products help prevent osteoporosis was paid for by the National Dairy Council, which ought to give you pause. You can get all the calcium you need from a varied, plant-based diet.

A study conducted by the Harvard School of Public Health concluded that milk makes you fat. Even a moderate intake consisting of three glasses of low-fat milk add more than 300 calories to the diet each day, and to top it off, even small amounts of milk or dairy products can lead to bloating and uncomfortable indigestion.

Alternatives: Do yourself a favor and try some almond milk with no sugar added. It is ideal for replacing the dairy milk in baked goods, and at about 30 calories per serving, it provides ample nutrition for 1/10th the calories! Other nut and seed milks also make good substitutes for dairy, and products such as non-dairy yogurt and cheese are readily available in most places.

Whole Wheat Products

Don't whole wheat products provide you with fiber, vitamins, and other nutrients? While it is true that whole wheat is nutritious, the consequences of eating products made with it outweigh the benefits. Whole wheat and some other grains contain phytic acid, which is a mineral blocker that prevents complete absorption of magnesium, iron, calcium, copper, and zinc. This is broken down when the grains are allowed to sprout, which is why I do recommend eating sprouted products (more on that in the next section!)

There's another reason that whole wheat is so hard for our bodies to handle: when eaten, it causes a spike in insulin production, plus it encourages the body to store extra glucose as fat.

Additionally, wheat contains gluten, which aggravates the digestive system, triggering systemic inflammation that contributes to irritable bowel syndrome, rheumatoid arthritis, and other low-grade illnesses – even in people who haven't been diagnosed with celiac disease.

Finally, whole wheat contains a component called gliadin, which is broken down into a morphine-like compound during digestion, creating an appetite for even more wheat. Wheat does have an addictive quality, which is why it can be so hard to stop eating things like bread, pasta, donuts, cookies, and other baked goods.

Alternatives: Since awareness about problems caused by wheat is growing, there are a number of fantastic alternatives available. Watch out for hidden sugar when choosing foods that are labeled as gluten-free. Consider baking your own occasional treats with options such as coconut flour and almond meal in place of whole wheat or white flour, so that you know exactly what is in your food.

Low Fat Products

When low fat foods were first introduced to supermarket shelves, people rejoiced. Finally, they thought, they could eat lots of tasty treats and lose weight at the same time. Unfortunately, manufacturers replaced the fat in the foods they were producing with more sugars, which are nothing more than empty calories. Eating a lot of low-fat processed foods increases insulin resistance, leads to high triglycerides, increases the level of harmful cholesterol, and increases the amount of dangerous fat that accumulates in the abdominal cavity and liver.

There's also a psychological component to the problem. When you see a label that says a product is low fat, you're likely to overconsume, thinking you are making a smart, healthy choice.

Finally, many of these products contain crazy chemicals including preservatives, colorants, flavorings, and texturants, all of which are designed to make these food-like products more palatable and more appealing to consum-

ers. Did you know that if you see the term “artificial flavor” on a product, that there could be ten or more extra chemicals that aren’t even listed?

Alternatives: Just eat real food! If you are craving a low-calorie snack, have some chopped veggies or a piece of fruit. Have some pistachios! These are lower in calories than other nuts, and they are full of healthy fiber, plus a little fat and some protein to keep your blood sugar from spiking out of control.

Soy Products

While soy products are typically touted as health foods, you might be surprised to learn that most of them just aren’t that good for you. Most of the soy that finds its way into foods such as soy milk, veggie burgers, chicken substitutes, and other products is genetically modified, and is grown with loads of chemical fertilizer, pesticide and herbicide. But that’s just the tip of the iceberg. Even organic soy products come with a whole host of issues that might make you think twice about consuming them.

- Soybeans contain phytoestrogens, which mimic the natural estrogen hormones found in the body. In women, consumption can cause estrogen dominance, which is linked to cancer, menstrual problems, and infertility. In men, consumption can lead to testosterone imbalance, low sperm count, infertility, and an increased risk of cancer. If you think

that phytoestrogens aren't strong, think again! A baby who consumes a diet made up of soy-based formula is consuming about the same amount of hormones you'd find in four birth control pills...*per day!*

- ➔ Soy also contains goitrogens, which are potent anti-thyroid compounds that can cause endocrine disruption and lead to thyroid disorders.
- ➔ Soymilk and other products that contain lots of soy often have added sugar, salt, preservatives, and other nastiness that does nothing to help improve your health.

Even if you stay away from soymilk and tofu, you still may be consuming quite a bit of soy. Here's one more reason to stay away from processed foods: Many of them contain soy – and it's almost never the organic, non-GMO variety. Look out for soy lecithin, soy protein isolate, soy protein concentrate, hydrolyzed vegetable protein, texturized protein, and other terms that contain the word “soy.”

Alternatives: Have nuts and seeds instead of soy! Enjoy almond milk, coconut milk, cashew milk, and other alternatives that don't contain soy. Look for the plain, unsweetened varieties.

Canned Foods

While frozen foods retain their nutrients well and while many are even more nutritious than fresh foods that have been shipped long distances to make their way to the supermarket, canned foods are less nutritious than fresh, and they are packed with preservatives. This is just one reason to avoid them.

First, many canned goods are now stored in containers with plastic liners designed to keep the food inside “fresh.” Unfortunately, this plastic coating usually contains bisphenol (BPA), which is made from crude oil, and which is harmful to health, causing problems such as hormone imbalances, hypertension, aggression, cancer, obesity, and heart disease. It leaches into the food stored in the cans, and when you consume it, it accumulates in your body. BPA kills rats in concentrations of approximately 1000 times *less* than what the average meal stored in a BPA-plastic lined can contains.

Second, many cans contain aluminum that leaks into food. Aluminum accumulates in the body over time, leading to memory problems including Alzheimer’s disease.

Alternatives: If you like to keep your pantry stocked with convenient foods, choose brands packed in glass jars instead of cans. Invest in a freezer and stock up on frozen foods if you like.

Foods Packed with Preservatives, Artificial Colors, and Flavors

If you eat processed foods of any kind, you're almost certainly consuming preservatives, which are chemicals that prevent food from spoiling. Many processed foods also contain artificial colors, which are added to make food appear more appealing. While many preservatives and artificial colors are considered safe worldwide, many others that are forbidden in some parts of the world are allowed in other areas. While it would take an entire book to discuss all the food additives, here are just a few examples to consider:

- Flavorings – Sometimes listed as “artificial” and sometimes listed as “natural,” flavorings can come from chemical compounds created in laboratories, or from weird places – like a beaver’s anal glands. Strawberry, blueberry, and raspberry flavors are often made from a substance called castoreum, which is an aromatic liquid that mixes with a beaver’s urine and allows it to mark its territory. It is found in ice cream, fruity drinks, candy, yogurt, and other items, and because it comes from a natural source, manufacturer’s are allowed to list it as “natural flavor.” Some other nasty sources of “natural flavor” include duck feathers, human hair, and the feces of the female lac bug.

- Tartrazine—Also known as E102, this yellow/orange color is forbidden in some parts of the world. It is known to increase hyperactivity in children, and to cause adverse reactions in asthmatics. People who are sensitive to aspirin also have problems when they eat foods that contain this artificial color.
- Alkanet / Alkannin – Known as E103, this yellow / orange color is forbidden in many places because it causes the same problems as E102. Many other yellow, green, and red colors cause similar issues.
- Sorbic acid and Sorbates—Also known by E-numbers E200 – E209, these preservatives are among the most dangerous of all food additives. They can cause headaches, damage the good bacteria in your intestines, cause intestinal upset, constipation, and allergies. They can exacerbate skin problems, autoimmune diseases, and cancer, along with a number of other more minor issues
- Benzoic acid and Benzoates – Known by E-numbers E210-E219, these dangerous preservatives cause and exacerbate a number of health problems including cancer, IBS, Crohn’s disease, ulcerative colitis, candida, and more
- Sulfur Dioxide and Sulfites – Known by E-numbers E220-E229, these are among the most common preservatives in the food industry, yet millions of people are intolerant. They can cause terrible headaches, intestinal upset, and skin disorders,

and when consumed, can destroy vitamins B5, B6, and B12. They exacerbate cancer, autoimmune diseases, skin disorders, and a number of intestinal issues

- ➔ Nitrates and Nitrites – Known by E-numbers E249-E259, these preservatives are sometimes called pickling salts. They are prevalent throughout the meat industry, even though many people are intolerant to them. They cause and exacerbate problems throughout the body, including cancer, skin diseases and disorders, intestinal disorders, candida, allergies, asthma and more
- ➔ Monosodium Glutamate (MSG) – Also known as E621, this flavor enhancer is toxic. It causes headaches for many, and can lead to skin disorders and intestinal upset

These are just some of the worst! Some of the less dangerous but equally disgusting ones are E402 (potassium alginate), E413 (tragacanth), and E478 (Lactylated fatty acid esters of glycerol and propane-1,2-diol). These emulsifiers give foods a smooth consistency, but do you really want to eat them? I urge you to spend a little time learning more about artificial colors, flavors, and preservatives.

Alternatives: Eat whole, real foods as much as possible. When your palate becomes accustomed to real, natural tastes, the artificial additives will often take on an unpleasant flavor and odor. It takes time to read labels but your health is worth the effort.

Breakfast Cereals

People have been eating boxed breakfast cereals for generations, so how is it possible that these things can be so bad for you? The answer lies in the highly processed grains, the preservatives, the artificial colors and flavors, and the added sugar that's found in so many breakfast cereals. They are nothing more than fast carbs that give your body a quick sugar rush and lead to a crash later on. Add the cow's milk that most people add to their breakfast cereal and you've got a recipe for dietary disaster.

The fact is, breakfast cereals are big money makers for food manufacturers. They are expensive, low in protein, and highly fattening.

Alternatives: Have a healthy smoothie for breakfast, or opt for a bowl of steel cut oatmeal. If you love your cold cereal and don't want to replace it, learn to make your own muesli with rolled oats, chopped nuts, and a little fresh fruit. Top it with some almond milk and enjoy the crunch. For a delicious hot breakfast, make a quick omelet with organic eggs and fresh vegetables. Add your favorite spices for even better flavor.



CHAPTER 2:

The Importance of Eating Organic

Over the years, debates over the benefits of organic food have intensified, with powerful companies that produce, process, package, market and sell conventionally grown and genetically modified products arguing that the things they have to offer are equal to if not better than plain old organic foods grown the old-fashioned way, without chemical fertilizers, pesticides, and other nasties.

I'm getting a little ahead of myself, so it's time for a little lesson in terminology. Let's start with "conventionally grown." Doesn't sound so bad, does it? But here's what it means:

"Conventionally grown" is a term that agriculture experts use to describe methods for growing edible plants such as grains, vegetables, and fruits, and in some cases, the term

“conventional” also applies to the production of animals for meat and dairy purposes. In conventional farming, synthetic chemicals are used to achieve a variety of effects:

- ➔ Fertilizers increase growth rate, size and yield
- ➔ Pesticides kill problem bugs (and unfortunately, important pollinators!)
- ➔ Antibiotics kill bacteria and stop or prevent infections
- ➔ Hormones can increase growth drastically

Conventional farmers get high yields, are often able to grow food outside of its natural season, and grow foods that are often larger than their organic counterparts. All of these sound like good things, and they came into being so that farmers could work more efficiently and provide more food at a cheaper price. The problem isn't so much in the idea, it is instead in the production!

To really understand the issue, let's take a look at organic methods – the ways that food has been grown for all of human history before the chemical age.

Almost all food is grown on land. Just like your body, land becomes less productive when it needs to rest and replenish itself. Different plants use different nutrients found in soil, and they leave different residues (or waste) behind. Traditional farmers were very careful in the way they raised crops. Growing the same plants over and over in the same spot strips the soil of its nutrients, but swapping (or

rotating crops) can have a beneficial effect, as can allowing the soil to rest between crops. Without rotation and resting, old-time farmers would have found themselves with dead fields in no time, flat.

Farmers used animals efficiently too, letting cattle into fields to fertilize them naturally after the crops had been harvested, allowing chickens to come in behind the cattle and work the manure into the soil and letting pigs aerate the soil. All these methods assured farmers that their families and communities would be sustained for generations, and the land would remain rich and fertile.

Along came industrialization and another term you might be familiar with: factory farming. Just like factories produce a single item on an assembly line in an efficient, streamlined fashion, so industrialists believed that they could help farmers produce a single product on a large tract and be as efficient as possible in order to increase production. They began to add chemical fertilizers that made crops grow faster, and they added a cocktail of herbicides and insecticides to the mix, reducing the number of weeds and bugs in every treated field.

The next problem that had to be faced was that since farmers were just focusing on a single type of crop, the soil was becoming depleted of its nutrients at an increasingly rapid pace, so even more chemicals had to be added to ensure that the farmers could keep production levels high.

The farm animals that once roamed the fields, helping farmers enrich their soil and keep production at sustain-

able levels in the past were done away with in many cases, and in others, farmers who decided to focus on raising animals for meat, milk, eggs, and fiber decided to take a “factory” approach to farming, focusing on just one or two species, confining the animals to small areas, and pumping them full of hormones and antibiotics in order to grow more meat and increase milk production while preventing their stock from becoming sickly in their cramped, dirty environments. Like people who eat junk and don’t exercise, factory farmed animals are overweight, prone to illness, and depressed due to the inability to engage in natural behaviors, leading some farmers (especially in the pork industry) to add industrial-strength antidepressants to the cocktail of pharmaceuticals they give the animals along with their feed.

Why antidepressants? Pigs are smarter than dogs, and in their natural state, they engage in a variety of social and “seeking” behaviors. Look at it this way: when you are allowed to go about your business and eat a variety of things, you feel pretty good. If someone locked you into a closet and fed you nothing but the same thing over and over (and a low-quality diet, at that!) you would quite soon begin losing your mind.

The industrial meat, eggs, and milk produced for the conventional marketplace are sourced from sickly animals that are pumped up with drugs that make them get to “harvest” size faster. While cooking eliminates some of these additives, some remain in the meat, milk, and eggs, resulting in more toxins entering your body when you consume them.

All of the excesses – fertilizers, pesticides, herbicides, and drug-laden animal waste – go into the environment. Toxic runoff enters streams, sickening and killing fish and other aquatic life, then moving on downstream to the oceans and contributing to uninhabitable dead zones. Essentially, products that were intended to make the earth thrive are killing one of the things all life depends on: the oceans!

Not only are the chemicals a pox on the planet, they're bad for you. They are toxic, meant to kill living cells. Many substances and practices that are legal for conventional farming in the United States are banned in countries where big agricultural companies do not grease the palms of politicians who make farm policies. Essentially, those who profit from the sickness they are spreading are deciding what people eat. Scary stuff, huh?

The theory behind conventional farming isn't bad, but the practices that have come about since the industrial revolution are leading to the release of massive amounts of chemicals and waste into the environment. Further, while science has yet to prove that all these chemicals on produce, along with products made from depressed, sickly, drugged animals aren't bad for you, do you really want to wait for the evidence to come along? After all, there was once a popular slogan saying "DDT is good for me!"

Genetically Modified Foods

Many people who are in the beginning stages of learning what's healthiest to eat are surprised to learn that many of the most common crops are genetically modified, or "GMO," meaning "genetically modified organisms." This is a relatively new science, and like industrial farming, its intent is to produce more food cheaper and faster. Unfortunately, genetic modification creates combinations of plant, animal, viral, and bacterial genes that are impossible for nature to produce.

The process of genetic modification is much different than hybridizing, which is essentially crossbreeding two related species in order to get a new or superior product.

So, what's the problem? Nearly all commercial GMOs are specifically engineered to withstand herbicides that would kill their non-GMO counterparts, and some of them even produce their own insecticides. Despite what GMO companies have to say about their products, non offer enhanced nutrition, drought tolerance, increased yield, or other real benefits. In the meantime, mounting evidence is showing that GMOs have a detrimental effect. Australia, Japan, and the entire European Union have banned the production and sale of genetically modified products. In the United States, where companies that produce genetically modified foods contribute to political campaigns, GMOs are found in approximately 80% of conventional and processed crops.

Not only are GMOs unnatural and toxic, they and the chemicals that go into producing them cause harm to the environment. Since about 80% of the GMOs grown worldwide are engineered to tolerate herbicides, the use of toxins such as Monsanto's Roundup has increase by about 15 times since the introduction of GMO crops. Super weeds and super bugs that also resist these toxins have emerged as a result, and these can only be killed with heavier toxins. The long-term impacts are unknown, but common sense says that it's best not to use these things to experiment on your body!

How can you tell if foods are non-GMO? Because laws do not require foods containing GMOs to be labelled, it was virtually impossible to trust anything that wasn't organic. Enter the Non-GMO project, a nonprofit organization which is committed to preserving the natural food supply, and which releases and updates a list of foods that have been independently verified as containing no genetically modified organisms.⁵

There's something besides the fat, sugar, and salt hiding in most processed foods – even the ones that say they're “all natural”: GMOs. That's just one more reason to steer clear of them! Canola, soy, and many other common crops are the subject of genetic modification, so without the organic or Non-GMO Project label, you cannot be sure that your food is clean. Where else are GMOs hiding? Take a look at

⁵ <http://www.nongmoproject.org/find-non-gmo/search-participating-products/>

this list, then look at some labels on common foods. You'll see that conventional manufacturers have a lot at stake!

- ➔ Amino Acids
- ➔ Aspartame
- ➔ Ascorbic Acid
- ➔ Sodium Ascorbate
- ➔ Vitamin C
- ➔ Citric Acid
- ➔ Sodium Citrate
- ➔ Flavorings (“natural” and “artificial”)
- ➔ High Fructose Corn Syrup (HFCS)
- ➔ Hydrolyzed Vegetable Protein
- ➔ Lactic Acid
- ➔ Maltodextrins
- ➔ Molasses
- ➔ Monosodium Glutamate (MSG)
- ➔ Sucrose
- ➔ Textured Vegetable Protein (TVP)
- ➔ Xanthan Gum
- ➔ Vitamins
- ➔ Yeast Products

Of course, there are organic versions of many of these items. By law, these may not contain GMOs, but that doesn't necessarily mean that all of them are good for you!

A Quick Intro to Organic Foods

The best way to ensure that you and your family are not eating GMOs or being constantly exposed to toxic pesticides, herbicides and chemical fertilizers is to eat organic food. In the United States, The National Organic Program provides a strict list of requirements for food producers, up to and including testing for prohibited contamination including GMOs.

In the fruit and vegetable aisle of the grocery store, take a look at labeling if you're considering non-organic produce. Conventionally grown fruit has a PLU code consisting of 4 numbers (e.g. 4015). Organically grown fruit has a PLU code consisting of 5 numbers beginning with 9 (e.g. 94015) Genetically modified fruit has a PLU code that consists of 5 numbers and begins with an 8 (e.g. 84015). You can scrub quite a bit of pesticide and herbicide off conventionally grown items, but you can't change what's in GMO produce.

Besides being grown without toxins or GMOs, what's so great about Organic? Here's a quick checklist:

- ➔ Organic farmers take care of their land by using natural fertilizers such as compost, and by raising a variety of crops

- ➔ Organic farming methods do not harm important pollinators such as bees
- ➔ Organic farmers typically strive to raise their animals in a safe but enriching environment
- ➔ In order to be classified as organic, meat, milk, eggs, and other products must come from animals raised without any drugs
- ➔ Organic foods may not be irradiated or treated with synthetic substances
- ➔ The use of sewage sludge is not permitted in the production of organic foods

Just focusing on eating organic can limit your exposure to a huge variety of toxins, improving your quality of life while inadvertently helping the environment. We'll tackle some of the challenges associated with making the switch from the Standard American Diet (SAD) diet to one consisting primarily of clean, wholesome foods in the next chapter.

A Nod to the Locally Grown Movement

The process of acquiring genetically modified strains is expensive for farmers, so most small landholders (many of whom want to avoid GMOs in the first place) provide crops that are free of genetic modification. Conversely the process of getting crops certified organic is a tough one too, so many small local farmers skip this step for their products, presenting options that do not bear official labeling.

Local farmers selling their wares at farmers markets and co-ops are typically committed to organic processes and building up the environment rather than engaging in processes that lead to its demise. In addition, produce from local farmers is normally fresher than items flown in from halfway across the world, meaning that you may be treating yourself to better nutrition by choosing locally grown options when they are available.

If you can, consider purchasing any animal products you consume from a local farmer who takes pride in what he or she produces! Many of these farmers offer tours of their facilities, allow their animals to engage in enriching natural behaviors, and strive to provide humane treatment. If you're going to eat animal products, doesn't it make sense to be sure that the chicken that produced your egg or the cow that gave the milk for your fresh mozzarella lives a life free from fear and pain? It sure does to me.

Growing and Raising Your Own

A fantastic extension of the local movement is that more people are interested in growing their own produce and raising a few animals on a small scale. For many who enjoy healthy, plant-based lifestyles, the best way to ensure food integrity is to raise an organic garden and keep a few backyard chickens for happy, healthy, humane egg production. The hens are fun to watch, and it's incredible to take such an active role in producing a healthy protein source at home. You don't have to raise an enormous garden or have

chickens to make a difference in your health (and your budget!), however. Even raising just a few of your own fruits or vegetables is a fantastic start. Many innovative, no-till gardening methods allow even apartment dwellers to grow things like strawberries, tomatoes and spinach on a little city patio.



CHAPTER 3:

The Best Foods for Good Health

Just eating organic isn't a guarantee that you'll be eating well! Luckily, if you want cake, cookies, crackers, or some other processed goodie once in a while, it's definitely best to make those occasional treats organic ones. It will be much easier for your body to get rid of any problematic hormonal residues than it will to eliminate all the pesticides, herbicides, and gunk that's in so many other options!

This being said, it's vital that you base your diet around a base of whole foods that are in a state as close to nature as you can get. Anything that has been pounded and pulverized or that has had lots of sugar, salt, or stabilizers added probably isn't the best option – even if it's labeled “diet,” “healthy,” or “all-natural.” The more closely a food item resembles its raw, unaltered state, the better it probably is for you.

There is ample evidence that shifting your diet away from a core of highly processed foods, animal products, and sweets makes a rapid improvement in health. Consider for a moment that the average American eats two pounds of animal products each day, most of it from conventional sources, and you'll quickly realize why very few of these products make it onto the following list.

Place these nutrient dense items at the center of your diet, and you'll soon find yourself looking and feeling better than ever – naturally. Please do note that there are many excellent foods that don't make it onto this list! If it's a colorful fruit or vegetable, it's probably great for you.

Beans and lentils – An inexpensive healthy diet mainstay! These little powerhouses pack in the protein, plus they're high in fiber, iron, complex carbohydrates and essential trace elements including zinc, potassium, and magnesium. Legumes help promote weight loss, and since they are high in soluble fiber, they reduce LDL (bad) cholesterol levels. Bonus: beans soak up the flavor of whatever you're cooking, so you can use them to replace meat in soups and stews.

Celery – Celery bulks up a variety of dishes and gives them a nice flavor, plus it acts as a good crunchy substitute for processed snacks such as chips. But that's not all! This fragrant green veggie reduces high blood pressure, as the phthalides it contains relax the muscles that surround major arteries. It also contains plenty of potassium, and essential nutrient for reducing problematic high blood pressure. Additionally, humble celery contains coumarin, an antioxidant that

enhances white blood cell activity and improves immunity. Since it has diuretic properties, it's an excellent vegetable for adding to cleansing smoothies and juices.

Beets – Bright red and brimming with nutrients, beets are an excellent source of folate, especially if you enjoy the greens along with the bright red or golden roots. Eating beets regularly can help to support good mental and emotional health, plus taking some time out to enjoy these tasty roots helps to support proper nerve function. This is thanks to manganese, which also happens to be part of the antioxidant enzyme called superoxide dismutase, a nutrient that may help you enjoy healthier aging with a lower risk of cancer and heart disease. As if this weren't impressive enough, beets contain high levels of a chemical called betaine, which plays a role in cellular reproduction and healthy liver function. Eat beets regularly for best results!

Broccoli (and its relatives!) – Broccoli is a cruciferous vegetable, and is related to such delicacies as cauliflower, cabbage and Brussels sprouts. Delicious raw or steamed, pureed and made into soup or eaten in salads, this delicious green veggie is sometimes called the “king of low carb vegetables.” It contains very little sugar, more vitamin C than an orange, as much calcium as a glass of dairy milk, loads of folate, and tons of fiber. Broccoli and its relatives help keep the body healthy at a cellular level, both by helping with repairs and by providing the nutrition needed for new cell production. These plants are an excellent source of iron, potassium, and vitamin K, and one cup of broccoli contains 4 grams of protein. Eat it up!

Buckwheat – Despite its name, this gluten-free food is not related to wheat! It’s actually a type of seed that makes an excellent substitute for rice. It’s the main ingredient in high-quality Japanese soba noodles, and it provides a number of outstanding health benefits. When toasted, buckwheat is known as kasha, which has a strong, nutty scent and a dark, reddish brown color that contrasts with the pale brownish-green tone of raw buckwheat. Buckwheat can help relieve some of the symptoms of type two diabetes, it strengthens capillary walls, and it can help bring high blood pressure down. It is an excellent source of fiber, manganese, copper and other nutrients.

Fermented Vegetables – Before canning and freezing methods were used to preserve foods, people used fermentation to keep their harvests edible throughout the winter. Sauerkraut, Kimchee, and Miso are some of the most common, but almost any vegetable can be fermented. Thanks to the healthy bacteria they contain, these vegetables are very good for your digestion. Because they are not cooked prior to fermentation, they retain most of their original nutrients. You can find these vegetables at some health food stores, and if you’re interested in making your own, there are lots of recipes available online.

Leafy Greens – Eat a variety of leafy greens, and try to include some of these delicious veggies in at least one or two meals and snacks per day. From arugula to spinach and chard to kale, they’re all good for you. Have them raw or cooked, and be sure to add just a little fat to your meal so that your body can best utilize the nutrition inside.

Nuts – Raw (unroasted) nuts without salt are among the most nutritious foods you can eat. Packed with protein, fiber, and essential nutrients including the fatty acids your body needs for optimum health, just a handful of nuts can help eliminate hunger and keep you feeling satisfied for hours. Add some to your smoothies, enjoy them alongside fresh fruit, and toss them on salads.

Organic Eggs – High in protein and free from nasty GMO grain, animal byproducts, and other feed additives given to conventional laying hens (who, by the way tend to spend their entire lives in filthy, cramped cages without room to stretch), good organic eggs from free range hens are a great meat-free source of vitamin B12. They're ideal for adding to any meal, and when hard-boiled, become an amazing source of portable nutrition. If you don't normally like eggs do yourself a favor, go to the farmer's market, and try some organic eggs from pastured chickens. The flavor is amazing, the eggs are super-fresh, and there's no guilt involved.

Red and Purple Berries – Brimming with antioxidants and wonderfully nutritious, berries are great raw, frozen, dried, or even cooked, so long as they haven't been coated with sweeteners. From acai to goji, blueberry to blackberry, and strawberry to raspberry, all fruits have something good to offer!

Red Cabbage – Raw red cabbage with a little sliced apple and some apple cider vinegar: delicious! This fantastic food is an outstanding source of vitamins A and D, plus it contains plenty of vitamin K, lots of folate, and a huge amount

of trace minerals that contribute to a healthy body. Like other red fruits and vegetables, red cabbage is brimming with antioxidants, which can boost your body's natural cancer-fighting enzymes.

Seeds – Raw, unsalted, unroasted seeds such as chia, flax, and sunflower make a fantastic, nutritious addition to your diet. You don't have to nibble on seeds like a little bird! Instead, add them to other foods such as salads and baked goods. Top your soup with some pumpkin seeds to add flavor and a gourmet look! Most seeds are fine whole; flax seeds, which happen to be an amazing source of Omega-3 fatty acid, need to be ground up to release the nutrition inside. You can grind them yourself or purchase them pre-ground.

Spelt – Spelt is an excellent alternative to wheat, as it is gluten free, highly nutritious, and wonderfully adaptable. Spelt flour is an awesome kitchen staple to keep on hand, and when you use it to make sourdough bread, you get the benefits that come with eating a fermented food plus the vitamins, minerals, fiber, and protein from the spelt itself.

Sprouts – All sorts of seeds can be sprouted and eaten! These tiny green plants are an outstanding source of nutrition, with vitamins, minerals, lots of protein (up to 35%!) and plenty of enzymes that help keep the body healthy. Sprouts are high in fiber and low in calories, and are fantastic for adding to everything from salads to sandwiches. You can easily grow them at home with a few basic supplies, and some markets carry them as well. Foods with sprouted whole grains are also a good choice.

Sweet Potatoes – Bake them, sauté them, cut them into strips, or mash them: The options are nearly endless. Because they are naturally sweet, they are thought to be high in undesirable sugary carbohydrates. Instead, they happen to be one of the best, most nutritious vegetables you can eat! High in beta carotene and vitamin C, they also contain loads of fiber and potassium.

Tomatoes – Raw or cooked, tomatoes are outstanding fruits to eat. While I typically advocate for a mostly raw diet, I make an exception with tomatoes. Concentrated, cooked tomatoes including organic canned varieties, contain high levels of lycopene, an antioxidant that has been shown to help prevent cancer. (link to 2009 journal of clinical oncology study)

Olive Oil – Replace other fats with olive oil and enjoy better cardiovascular health. This is one of the best oils for you, and of all the types available, extra virgin olive oil is best as it is least refined.

Tea – There are so many incredible varieties of tea available, it's a wonder that people continue to drink soda. Sweetened with a little stevia and delicious hot or cold, tea is an amazing beverage that contains plenty of antioxidants. The teas that are best for you are the ones that contain no caffeine. Red rooibos tea, for example, boosts the immune system, reduces the risk of heart disease and helps stave off premature aging. It even helps put a stop to nagging headaches! If you're trying to get off caffeine and

hate the thought of putting yourself through uncomfortable side effects, this tea will help.

Watermelon – Because watermelon is naturally sweet, many people believe it is high in calories, and they go to extremes to avoid it. In fact, watermelon is low in calories. It's high in vitamins A and C, plus it contains lots of potassium and lycopene, which is an important antioxidant. The thick rind protects the flesh inside from pesticides, so conventionally grown watermelons are quite safe to eat.

Wine – What? Are you kidding me? Not at all. If you're going to indulge in an alcoholic beverage, have a little bit of organic red wine. Enjoy every sip, and then go back to drinking your water. Red wine contains lots of antioxidants and it's great for heart health, so go ahead and enjoy it in moderation.

Yogurt and Greek Yogurt – High in protein and calcium, these products contain live, active cultures that benefit the good bacteria living in your gut. If you want to enjoy milk-based products like these, choose brands made with goats' milk or sheep's milk. If these aren't available or if they don't appeal to you, look for non-dairy options. Whichever you prefer, be sure to choose the plain, nonfat kinds. They contain none of the added sugar or artificial sweetener that's found in many flavored or fruit on the bottom yogurts made with cows' milk. If you like your yogurt sweet, use some stevia or honey and add some chopped fruit of your own. Spice things up with a little dash of vanilla!



CHAPTER 4:

Shopping Tips: Follow These for Great Health!

One of the best things you can do for your health is to take extreme care when shopping. Eat before you go so that you won't be tempted to give in to unhealthy snacks.

The Supermarket and the Health Food Store

No matter how large or small your local grocery store is, you can find quite a few healthy choices there if you know what to look for. Many larger supermarkets and specialty

food stores have healthy, organic options that small and mid-size chain stores don't carry. If you have a local food co-op, you will find lots of excellent, interesting options available, including locally grown produce. You can find a [state by state list of co-ops](#) located in the United States here. Explore your food shopping options as you break away from old routines. You'll be amazed at what is available!

The best strategy to follow when grocery shopping is to choose fresh ingredients and whole foods instead of items that have been refined or processed. Good choices are everywhere! Let's get started, remembering to choose organic options as much as possible.

We'll begin with protein. You might be surprised to find out that not all protein sources are created equally, and you might be equally surprised to discover that you can eat a diet consisting mostly of vegetables and enjoy plenty of high-quality protein. If you are trying to lose some weight, save money and enjoy a more varied diet by using meats as side dishes rather than as the centerpiece of your meal. Most Americans and other westerners eat way too much meat! This being said, we'll start our journey through the store in the meat section.

Meat

Best Choices:

Skinless poultry – White meat has the least fat and cholesterol. Dark meat, such as skinless, boneless chicken thighs, has more iron, but still comes in with less fat and cholesterol than red meats.

Lamb – Lamb can be a lean choice. Look for very little marbling and watch out for cuts that have been packaged with broth or additives of any kind. The best cuts of lamb are lean leg steak, lean breast, loin chops, leg or shank, and shoulder

Buffalo – This meat is leaner than beef and can be used in the same recipes. It is almost always grass-fed and organic, as buffalo retain their wild nature and do not do well in feedlots. If you have the choice between buffalo and beef, the buffalo is almost certainly better for you.

Seafood – Wild caught salmon and trout are best.

Good Choices:

Beef – Lean and extra lean beef cuts include loin, tenderloin, fillet or eye fillet, eye of round roast, thick flank steak, sirloin tip side or top sirloin (topside), top round roast or steak (butterball steak), bottom round roast or steak (silverside). Look for grass-fed beef as it tends to be lower in fat, and as these animals are not fed a diet of GMO-corn.

Pork – If you can find pasture or forest raised organic pork, it can be a fairly healthy choice. Watch out for cuts with lots of visible fat and leave those behind. The best cuts tend to be tenderloin (fillet or eye fillet), loin roast (top loin roast), loin chops (top loin chop), sirloin roast (eye of loin), and loin rib chops (center cut). If your only choice in pork is conventionally raised, it's best to leave it at the supermarket. Factory farmed hogs are raised in disgusting environments and fed a steady diet of GMOs, animal byproducts, drugs and hormones. In some places, hogs are fed human waste. Remember, you are what you eat!

Seafood – Modern fishing practices are often destructive to the environment and in some places, slave labor is used aboard fishing ships! Be sure to look for the Marine Stewardship Council's seal of approval before purchasing fish. The [certified sustainable seafood label](#) ensures that no shoddy practices were used in catching or raising the fish inside the package.

Worst Choices

Ground meat – Typically higher in fat, ground meat is often contaminated with organ meat. Ground beef usually contains meats from different sources, so when you purchase a package of it, you could be getting meat from the US, Canada, and Mexico, for example.

Horse meat – Despite what marketers want people to believe, horse meat is usually contaminated with performance enhancing drugs and other additives given to the

horse while it was alive. Horses are not raised for meat in most places, and much of the meat that ends up in the market comes from race horses and other performance animals that were never intended for slaughter. The meat is illegal in the United States because some of the toxins it contains can cause serious illness and death to people who consume it⁶, but regulations are so loose that some ground “beef” actually contains horse meat. The slaughter of horses for human consumption is illegal in the US, but US horses do go to Canada and Mexico for slaughter, where their meat is then either consumed locally or shipped off to the EU, Russia, Asia, and other places for consumption.

Organ meats—Organ meat such as liver and kidney is really not recommended! Consider for a moment that the liver filters every substance that enters the body, and then think about all the toxins that it contains. Even organic liver is full of cholesterol.

Processed meats – Most hot dogs, sausages, and cold cuts are full of nasty additives and preservatives. There are a few organic options that don’t contain anything other than meat and spices, but these are usually made with ground meat that could be adulterated. It is best to avoid these meats completely.

⁶ <http://www.foodproductiondaily.com/Safety-Regulation/Tainted-US-horse-meat-puts-world-consumers-at-risk-welfare-body>

Vegetarian Protein Sources

Best Choices:

Raw, unsalted nuts and seeds – Remember that these are amazing for your health. They can be enjoyed in a variety of ways, and a little goes a long way. Freeze or refrigerate them in sealed packages when you get home, as this will prevent rancidity.

Nut butters: Pure nut butters are best! The only ingredient listed should be nuts. If you're allergic, look for sunflower butter, which is made from sunflower seed hearts. A little bit goes a long way, and contains all the goodness of nuts or seeds while serving as a convenient, tasty way to add interest to your diet.

Legumes – Dried legumes including beans and lentils are very good for you, plus they are very inexpensive. They lend themselves to a wide array of recipes and cook with even the most basic skills can easily use them to replace meat in recipes. If you're in a hurry, get your beans in the frozen food section instead of canned.

Dairy Products – Choose items made with goat's or sheep's milk if they are available. Yogurt and Kefir can be great for your health as long as they are organic and contain no additives.

Non-dairy milks and yogurts – Not too long ago, there weren't many non-dairy milk options other than soy, which

you want to steer clear of! Today, you'll find many wonderful options to choose from. Look for the ones without sugar and other additives as they are best for you.

Eggs – Organic free range eggs are best. Look for ones from hens that are supplemented with Omega-3s.

Good Choices:

Edamame – These raw soybeans can be a nice treat but remember that eating too many can disrupt your hormonal balance. Never eat edamame unless they are organic! Many brands are toxic GMO soybeans covered in herbicide and pesticide.

Egg substitutes – If your doctor has advised you to have egg substitutes instead of real eggs, look for organic, free range ones rather than going for whatever is cheapest. Many of these products contain emulsifiers, artificial colors, and other nasty things that do more harm than good.

Canned beans – If you have no other option, carefully select organic canned beans in packaging labeled as BPA-free. Rinse and soak them before using them, as this will help remove the added sodium that's often present. If you have the choice, get low-sodium canned beans.

Worst Choices:

Cow's milk and milk products – Avoid these for all the reasons mentioned in chapter two.

Conventionally produced eggs – These eggs come from hens that suffer in cramped cages, usually with hens in upper layers of battery cages defecating on top of the birds below them. The hens are fed a terrible diet full of GMOs that end up in their eggs. These are cheap, but they're terrible on many levels.

Unfermented soy products – Tofu and soy milk sound healthy but they are highly processed and many items that contain them are full of additives. Try to find other options.

Processed vegetarian foods – The vegetarian versions of junk food, these are put in packaging that makes you think they're tasty, healthy options. To be fair, there are some good ones out there but you must do some detective work to find them. Look out for additives and reject anything that's not organic and that's not made with whole, healthy ingredients.

Nut butters made with additives – Unfortunately, many of the nut butters available in grocery stores contain stabilizers, sugar, salt, and other unwholesome additives. Look out for things like hydrogenated or partially-hydrogenated vegetable oil. The only ingredient in your nut butter should be nuts.

Starches

Best Choices:

There are many great choices available, but be sure to look out for those healthy sounding labels, which are often nothing more than marketing tools. Brown rice, wild rice, and ancient grains like kamut, spelt, and quinoa are all great choices. Be sure to buy them in their raw, natural state as some convenience items have lots of extra salt and unwholesome additives.

Watch out for things that have been refined. Look for salt, preservatives, hydrogenated fat and sugar. Avoid all of these.

Potatoes are a good source of minerals and when you eat them with their peels, they are quite healthy for you. Just be sure not to eat too much, and ensure that you have them along with plenty of fiber and protein, plus a little fat so that your blood sugar doesn't spike. Choose organic potatoes as conventionally raised ones are usually filled with toxins.

Squashes, sweet potatoes, peas, and parsnips are starches and vegetables all at once. They are high in fiber, and add a satisfying feel to your meals. There are many recipes available that provide inspiration for ways to use these wonderful foods.

Organic whole grain items made from quinoa, buckwheat,

oats and flax are some examples. Some of the best are made with sprouted whole grains. Granola can be a good choice but watch out for sweeteners.

Whole grain and specialty flours – Spelt, oat, rye, kamut, einkorn, bulgur, teff, amaranth, quinoa, sorghum, buckwheat, brown rice, wild rice, whole corn meal, and coconut are some options.

Good Choices:

Whole grain items crackers, muffins, wraps, and tortillas can be good for you, but use caution as many have additives.

Pastas made from whole grains, spelt, kamut, quinoa, and buckwheat are nice in moderation.

Worst Choices:

Look out for colors, sweeteners, preservatives, and trans fats, be sure to read the labels and always look out for white flour when buying any kind of starch product, even if the label looks healthy.

Donuts, cake, cookies, and white bread products are among the worst.

Fats

Best Choices:

We need fat in our diet! The very best are saturated, polyunsaturated and monounsaturated. Use small amounts of avocado, flax seed, or sesame seed oil to add flavor. Make the majority of the fat in your diet come from whole foods such as nuts, seeds, and avocados, and stock your pantry with extra-virgin olive oil to use in cooking. If you need a light oil for baking, light olive oil may work, or light sunflower oil. Organic canola oil is also a good choice.

Worst:

The worst fats are those that have been processed, or that come from genetically modified sources. Shortening, margarine, corn oil, soybean oil, and vegetable oil are poor choices, as is conventionally raised canola oil.

Fruits and Vegetables

As long as you're choosing organic, all fruits and vegetables are great for you. Add lots of different colors to your cart!

While you're looking at produce, stop by the mushroom section. These nutritional powerhouses add tons of flavor to food and are excellent for your health, with lots of zinc, protein, prebiotics, vitamins, and minerals. Some good

ones to try include white button, oyster cremini, porcini, chanterelle, Portobello, enoki, shiitake, maitake, truffle, morel, and wood ear.

Making the Shift!

It's normal to feel shocked about the things you've probably been eating all your life, yet so many of these "foods" have addictive qualities that it can be tough to make changes. If you haven't done so already, consider going "cold turkey" by enjoying a cleanse or detox.

In the event you've done that already and are striving to eat healthier, you'll find that just adding more healthy foods to your diet instead of telling yourself what you "can't" have is easiest.

Lastly, keep on learning about the foods you decide to eat. Knowing where they came from, what processes went into growing or harvesting them, and what kind of environmental and social costs are associated with them can help to firm your resolve to enjoy a healthier diet based on whole, organic foods.

If you slip up, just start over. Take this process one meal at a time, trying to make each day better than the one before, and soon you'll be reaping the rewards. Here's to your health!