

# Healthy shopping is possible for single folks on the go

Single people are often on the go, but that doesn't mean their diets have to suffer. There are ways of taking time-saving shortcuts at the grocery store that won't sacrifice nutrition or stretch the waistline, according to Barbara Bailey, outpatient dietician for the Good Health Center at Good Samaritan Hospital in Baltimore.

"Most people don't focus enough on fruits and vegetables," said Ms. Bailey. "It's the original convenience food. How hard is it to peel a banana?"

Most stores sell pre-packaged fresh fruit and vegetables that are already cut. Salads come in a variety of healthy options and even frozen dinners can be good selections as long as people pay attention to the ingredients on the label, she said.

"You want to go with dinners that are lower in fat and lower in sodium," Ms. Bailey explained. "You might need to add a side salad with it."

The nutritionist said it's extremely important to eat products with whole grains, a good source of fiber. Whole wheat bagels, muffins and breads are easily available, she said, as is instant brown rice.

When purchasing meats, Ms. Bailey said shoppers should look for lean meats and trim any excess fat. If a single person doesn't have time to prepare a meal, it's okay to buy fried chicken or other pre-cooked meats at the grocery store - just take the skin off and throw it away, she said.

To wash meals down, there's nothing simpler or more healthy than water, according to Ms. Bailey. If someone must have soda, chose diet soft drinks that are calorie free and sugar free, she said.

When eating at a fast-food restaurant, it's better to pick healthy choices like salads or grilled chicken instead of fatty, calorie-loaded, super-sized hamburger, Ms. Bailey said.

“Don’t be afraid to ask for substitutions,” she said. “Many restaurants automatically serve french fries with their sandwiches. Ask for a salad instead.”

Choosing foods that have already been cut, cooked or packaged doesn’t come without a cost, according to Ms. Bailey.

“You have to remember that you will pay for someone else’s labor,” she said.

If there’s one secret to healthy shopping, it’s sticking to the perimeter of the grocery store, where fresh foods like fruits and vegetables are located, Ms. Bailey said.

“That’s where the healthiest food is,” she said.