



Six Supermarket Myths

Food and nutrition misinformation is everywhere, and it's even found its way to the grocery store. On your next shopping trip keep these myths in mind so you won't be fooled!

Myth: Fresh fruits and vegetables are better than canned or frozen

When it comes to produce, all forms - fresh, frozen or canned – are healthy choices when you purchase them thoughtfully.

Eating the recommended 5-9 serving of fruits and veggies a day is easy when you include all three options. Here are a few tips:

It's best to buy fresh produce when it's in season and can be eaten within three days of purchase. Because fresh is perishable, it can quickly lose flavor and nutrients if it sits around too long on your counter or in your fridge.

Most canned and frozen fruits and vegetables are packed within hours of being picked so they retain their vitamins and nutrients. Because they're always ready when you are, they're good pantry items to keep on hand to round out your week's meals or for last-minute dinners. When tightly sealed in bags or containers, fruits and vegetables can be safely frozen for 8-10 months. Canned products have a shelf life of at least two years. It's recommended that canned goods be stored in moderate temperatures (75° F or below).



When shopping for canned or frozen foods, check the date on the package. Some manufacturers will have a day, month and year of production, others simply the year. For healthier options, reach for products that are low in sodium and added sugar.

Fresh fruit is perfect for a grab-and-go snack, packed in a lunch box or as an after-dinner treat. Small cans of fruit make a good afternoon pick me up; they can be easily stored in a desk drawer (along with a can-opener, for cans without a pop-top).

Myth: Brown eggs are healthier than white eggs

According to the Egg Nutrition Center, the color of the shell doesn't affect the quality, flavor, nutritional content, shell thickness, or cooking properties of the egg.

Differences in shell color are due to differences in the breed and color of the hen. Hens with reddish-brown feathers and ear lobes lay eggs with brown shells, while hens with white feathers and ear lobes lay eggs with white shells.

The only real difference between a brown egg and a white one is the price. Hens that lay brown eggs are larger and therefore require more feed than hens that lay white eggs. For that reason, eggs with brown shells may be sold at a slightly higher price to cover the additional costs for feed.



Myth: Sea salt is really the same as table salt

Ounce for ounce, all salts contain the same amount of sodium; however, refined table salt is purely sodium chloride, without its natural minerals intact. (Most brands have added iodine, an important mineral to guard against hypothyroidism; anti-caking agents to keep the salt from clumping up may be added as well.) Because it's finely ground, we may use more salt than we realize!

Sea salts are less processed than table salt and can retain up to 84 naturally-occurring trace minerals including potassium, iron and zinc. Most have larger crystals giving a different mouth feel – and flavor burst – than table salt. Because sea salt doesn't provide iodine, some producers are adding it to their product.

When it comes to salt, it's really about flavor more than nutrition. And when every milligram of sodium counts, you want to make sure the salt you're eating is one you enjoy for its taste and texture. Find a type of salt that works for how you cook and eat, and be mindful, of how much you're consuming on a daily basis* (keeping in mind that salt can be found in your favorite snack or restaurant meal, too).

**Current dietary guidelines say most adults should consume at most 1500-2300mg of sodium per day (that's 2/3 teaspoon to 1 teaspoon of salt total, including that in foods and what you add from the salt shaker).*

Myth: Turbinado (raw) sugar is more nutritious than white (refined) sugar

Spoonful for spoonful there's really no difference between these sugars nutritionally. Contradictory to its name, raw sugar is processed, just less so than white. Because white sugar goes through more steps in processing, it loses the caramel-like flavor (and dark color) of molasses that is retained in the turbinado sugar.

Although the little brown crystals of raw sugar contain traces of calcium, iron and potassium, their amount is too small to warrant any real nutrition difference between raw and refined white sugar; when comparing calories per teaspoon, there's little difference there as well. White sugar weighs in at 16 calories per teaspoon; raw sugar is 17.

Myth: Milk is best stored in a glass bottle

There's something charming and old-fashioned about milk in a glass bottle, but for longer shelf life and nutrition, an opaque container is best because the B vitamin, riboflavin, can break down easily when exposed to light for prolonged periods of time.

Another tip to keep milk fresher longer is to store it on an interior shelf of your fridge, rather than the door. Interior temperatures stay more consistent, whereas the temperature on the door fluctuates each time it's opened.



Myth: The bigger package is always the better price

Not necessarily. The only way to know for sure is to determine the price per unit.

Most stores today have the unit price listed along with the sell price on their shelves near the product. But if they don't, it's easy to calculate. (You probably have a calculator right on your phone!) To determine which is the better value among products, divide the price by the number of overall ounces. This is the price per unit.

Once you've decided on the best deal financially, don't forget to consider the nutritional value, by comparing the ingredient lists and nutrition facts panels of your two choices. If you have to pay a little more but the product is a lot healthier, it may still be a better value for your health.

So, bigger isn't always better, and knowing how to calculate the unit price – and compare nutritional value – will ensure you're getting the best value overall for your money.