



# Tri Fit's Healthy Habits

## March's Goal

# Store to Table Essentials for Healthy Eating

Healthy eating begins at the grocery store and is made easier if you have a well-stocked kitchen; both pantry and cooking utensils. Share your favourite tips for shopping and food preparation or your most essential utensil at **#TriFitNutrition**

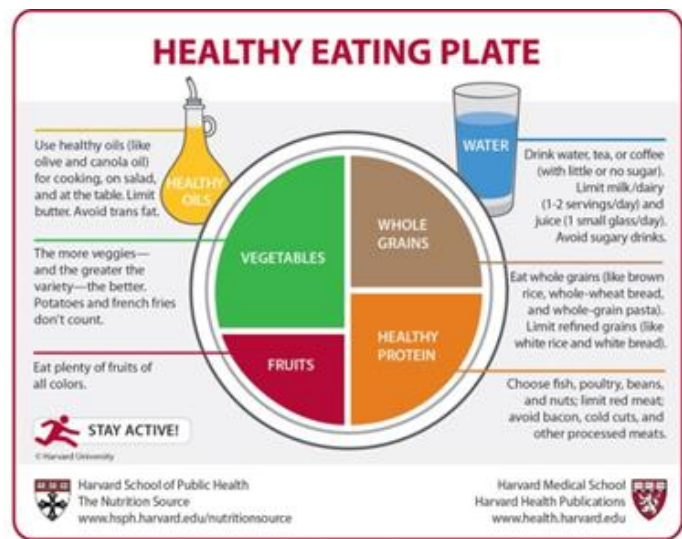
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## Store to Table: Essentials for Healthy Eating

Healthy eating begins at the grocery store and preparation is the best strategy to help tackle the most daunting shopping trips. Whether you're counting calories or counting dollars, the following tips will help make grocery shopping an enjoyable experience. Share your shopping and meal preparation tips on social media at **#TriFitNutrition**

### Before you head to the store:

**Plan ahead:** Do an inventory of your pantry using this month's "**Pantry Essential Checklist**". Keeping your pantry well stocked will insure that there are always quick and easy healthy meals at hand. Bring your pantry essentials checklist with you to the grocery store, and stock up on essential items.



**Plan your meals:** Take 30 minutes or so to plan your meals for the week. Use the healthy eating plate to guide your choices. Be sure to include a variety of colourful vegetables on your shopping list.

**Menu**

**Shopping**

**Other**

**Compare prices:** Pick up grocery store flyers and compare prices for foods you consume most. Pay special attention to "loss leader" items on the front page as these are your best buys. When comparing prices in store look for the unit price.

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**Never go to the grocery store hungry:** Have a well-balanced snack that includes protein, a little healthy fat and a fruit or vegetable e.g. an apple and a handful of almonds. This will keep blood sugars balanced and decrease the likelihood of impulse purchases.

**Stick to your shopping list:** Sticking to your list will improve efficiency at the grocery store, decrease the amount of time you spend shopping, and prevent over spending. Tip: If you do not have a shopping list, choose a basket instead of a cart as this will insure that you leave with essential items only.

## At the store:

**Stick to the periphery of the store:** The most nutritious foods are fresh and have an expiration date. Here you will find fresh produce, meat and dairy. Start your trip in the produce department and fill at least ½ of your cart with fresh vegetables and fruit.

**Look for the shortest ingredients list:** When shopping for pantry items, look for products with the fewest ingredients listed.

**Ignore health claims:** When comparing labels, pay attention to the ingredients list. If you cannot pronounce it, or do not understand the ingredients list put it back on the shelf. Healthy food does not need to make a health claim.

**Be wary of fortified foods:** When a food is fortified it is often processed first. Added nutrients are not always best.

**Shop local and in season:** To save money and splurge on flavour, shop in season. Local foods are at the height of freshness and packed with vitamins, minerals and phytonutrients. These foods are competitively priced when in abundance.



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**Choose the Clean Fifteen:** Save money on conventional foods and look for the best prices for the clean fifteen. These foods are sprayed the least. Choose organic varieties if they appear on the Dirty Dozen list.

**Join a rewards program:** Check with the grocery stores you frequent to see if they have rewards programs where you can earn points towards free groceries for your purchases. If they do not you may want to consider joining a financial institution that offers points towards grocery purchases.



## Time saving tricks:



### Organic home delivery baskets:

Subscribing to an organic home delivery service will save time and guarantee that a variety of organic foods will be delivered to your front door. Many companies now offer the option of adding eggs, dairy and other organic foods to their baskets. A quick online search will give you a variety of options.

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## Food Safety & Storage

Proper storage will help extend the life of these good-for-you foods. Here are storage tips for common grocery store items.



**Fresh herbs:** Fresh herbs are best stored unwashed, wrapped in a damp paper towel and stored in a ziplock bag.

**Potatoes, Sweet Potatoes and Winter Squash:** Best stored in a cool dark place.

**Butter:** Unopened butter can be stored in the freezer

up to one year.

**Dry ingredients:** Purchase in bulk and store in airtight containers in a cool, dark and dry place.

**Meat:** if you don't plan on eating the meat you purchase within a week, freeze it. To avoid freezer burn wrap meat in several layers of plastic or foil and store in an airtight container.

### Table to freezer- How long to store

When it comes to refrigerator storage, "You're better safe than sorry" and "When in doubt throw it out" are two common phrases that can and should be taken to heart, if you're not sure if the item is safe to eat.

### General guidelines

- 1) Most leftover foods can be stored and eaten within 3 to 4 days.
- 2) Food that is stored in the fridge and freezer should be labeled and stored in air tight containers.
- 3) If you are storing liquids in the freezer you will want to leave room for expansion as liquids expand when frozen.
- 4) Uncooked food should not be stored out of the refrigerator for more than 4 hours. After this time the risk of food poisoning increases.
- 5) Bacteria grow in warm temperatures so if the room is exceptionally warm be sure to refrigerate immediately.



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## To freeze or refreeze

Fresh food that is properly stored in the freezer can last for several months, whereas precooked food is a little bit different. The following guidelines answer the question to refreeze or not to refreeze.

## General guidelines

- 1) Food that is thawed in the refrigerator is safe to refreeze without cooking; however there may be a difference in quality due to moisture lost when thawing.
- 2) Cooked left overs should be frozen within 3-4 days
- 3) Do not refreeze any foods left outside the refrigerator longer than 2 hours or 1 hour in temperatures above 90 °F.
- 4) If previously cooked foods are thawed in the refrigerator, the unused portion can be refrozen.
- 5) Previously frozen meat, poultry or fish purchased from a retail store can be refrozen if handled properly.



## Snip and Save- a quick reference guide



## Fridge or Freezer

	Refrigerator (40 °F or below)	Freezer* (0 °F or below)
Sausage, raw (chicken, pork, turkey, beef)	1 to 2 days	1 to 2 months
Bacon	7 days	1 month
Fresh Beef, Veal, Lamb & Pork	Ground: 1 to 2 days Chops: 3 to 5 days Roasts: 3 to 5 days Steaks: 3 to 5 days	3 to 4 months 4 to 6 months 4 to 13 months 6 to 12 months
Chicken or Turkey whole	1 to 2 days	1 year
Chicken or Turkey pieces	1 to 2 days	9 months
Vegetable or meat stews	3 to 4 days	2 to 3 months
Leftovers: Cooked meat or poultry	3 to 4 days	2 to 6 months
Chicken nuggets or patties	3 to 4 days	1 to 3 months
Pizza	3 to 4 days	1 to 2 months



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## Safe Thawing

There are three ways to thaw frozen food safely: In the refrigerator, in cold water or in the microwave. If you can plan ahead, the ideal way to defrost is in the refrigerator. This can be done overnight or can take a few days. For large items such as a turkey allow one day for every 5 pounds of weight.

For a quick thaw method place food in a leak proof plastic bag and immerse in cold water. This is an important step. If the bag leaks, bacteria from the air or surrounding environment can be introduced to the food. Change the water every 30 minutes or so to insure that the water is always cold. Cook immediately after thawing.

If using a microwave to defrost food it is important to cook it immediately after thawing as some of the areas of the food may become warm and begin to cook during the microwave thawing process.

## Snip and Save- a quick reference guide

When it comes to food safety its best to use a meat thermometer to insure meats reach a safe internal cooking temperature. Use the following chart as your guideline.



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## Safe cooking temperatures

Food	(°F)
Ground: Turkey, Chicken All cuts: Poultry	165
Ground: Beef, Pork, Veal, Lamb Egg dishes	160
Steaks, Roasts, Chops: Beef, Veal, Lamb Fresh Pork and Raw Ham Fin Fish	145 Or until flesh is opaque and separates easily with a fork
Precooked Ham (to reheat)	140
Eggs	Until yolks and whites are firm
Shrimp, lobster, and crabs	Until flesh is pearly and opaque
Clams, mussels	Until shells open during cooking (discard shells that don't open)
Scallops	Cook until flesh is milky white or opaque and firm.

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## Kitchen Confidential – The Essential Utensils

There is no question that home meal preparation is cheaper and better for you, and having the right pots and utensils can help you cook like a master chef! If you are still using chipped pots, plastic spoons and dull knives left over from your college era, it might be time to invest in new kitchen supplies. Luckily, you can get by on surprisingly few items, as long as you choose wisely. The following is your essential kitchen supply list to help you get started!

### Essential Knives

- **8" Chef's Knife:** Designed for chopping, slicing and carving
- **Bread knife:** Perfect for cutting fresh bread and extra-ripe tomatoes.
- **Paring knife:** Ideal for making small cuts and peeling fruit



*Top to bottom: Chef's knife, Bread knife, Paring knife*

The secret to best results is keeping your knives very sharp either with a sharpening stone or have them sharpened at a trustworthy kitchen store.

### Signs that your knives need replacing:

- Wobbly or cracked wooden handles
- Loose parts
- Protruding rivets
- Broken tips or chips in the blade



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## Essential Utensils

A few good utensils will meet most of your food preparation demands. Avoid purchasing plastic utensils and accessories as these can melt with extreme heat and wear down over time. Instead choose stable materials such as wood, bamboo, silicone or stainless steel. Stock your kitchen drawers with the following:

- **Ladle**
- **Tongs**
- **Metal spatula**
- **Kitchen shears**



- **Vegetable peeler**
- **Rubber spatula**
- **Slotted Spoon**
- **Whisk**

## Essential Pots and Pans

As with kitchen utensils, a few basic items meet most culinary demands. Your best bet is to choose cookware made from stable non-leaching material such as stainless steel and cast iron. If you have coated cookware that is peeling and wearing away, discard. Wash gently without scouring and avoid using metal and hard plastic utensils to scrape pots as scratching can ruin the surface. Use wood, bamboo or silicone utensils instead. Essential cookware includes:



- **Dutch oven-** Perfect for cooking stews and braising inexpensive cuts of meats
- **Roasting pan-** Ideal for oven roasting meats, vegetables
- **Frying pan-** Handy for searing salmon, sautéing vegetables and pan-cooking chicken
- **Stock pot-** The high sides and round base prevent pasta, chili and soup from burning.
- **Sauce pan-** Select 2 sizes of stainless steel heavy pots

*\*Recommended storage times are for quality only, as freezing keeps food safe almost indefinitely.*

Sources: <http://www.foodsafety.gov/keep/charts/mintemp.html>; <http://www.womenshealthmag.com/nutrition/buy-healthier-groceries>;

<http://www.eatright.org/Public/content.aspx?id=5493>; <http://www.nynutritiongroup.com/grocery-shopping-guidelines/>;

<http://www.foodsafety.gov/keep/charts/storagetimes.html>; [http://www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/portal/fsis/topics/food-safety-education/get-answers/food-safety-fact-sheets/safe-food-handling/freezing-and-food-safety/CT\\_Index](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/portal/fsis/topics/food-safety-education/get-answers/food-safety-fact-sheets/safe-food-handling/freezing-and-food-safety/CT_Index); <http://www.goodhousekeeping.com/recipes/cooking-tips/guide-to-freezing-food>; <http://www.realsimple.com/food-recipes/tools-products/cookware-bakeware/stock-these-pots>; <http://healthycanadians.gc.ca/drugs-products-medicaments-produits/consumer-consommation/home-maison/cook-cuisinier-eng.php>



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