



# So You Think You Can Shop?

## The Quiz - What's your shopping game plan?

### 1. A whole grain product will:



- a. Have the word "Healthy" or "Multi-Grain" on the front label.
- b. List a whole grain as the first ingredient.
- c. Be brown or dark in color.

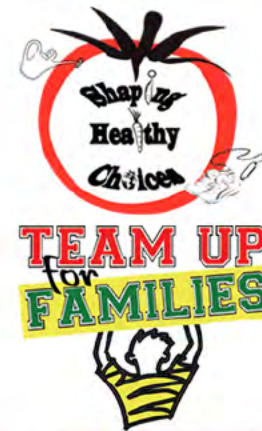
### 2. Avoid juice labeled:

- a. No sugar added.
- b. Aid, drink or punch.
- c. 100%



### 3. The most basic and nutritious foods are often placed:

- a. On the end of aisles.
- b. Around the perimeter of the store.
- c. At the check-out stands.



#### The results are in!

##### If you chose mostly A's...

You may need to re-think your plan. You may be a little too trusting – packaging can be very misleading. Words like "Healthy," "Natural," "Light," or "A Good Source of..." don't always show the whole picture. Learning to use the Nutrition Facts and ingredient labels goes a long way to making healthier choices. See "Just the Facts, Ma'am" to learn simple tips for using the label at the store. For other tips on how to improve your shopping game plan check-out "The Amazing Grocery Race".

##### If you chose mostly B's...

Congratulations! - you are a smart shopper who knows that cooking healthy can be a challenge but utilizing the Nutrition Facts and ingredient labels helps you make better choices. You have learned that the big print on the front of packages isn't always the best source of information and can actually be misleading. You also know that fresh unprocessed foods found around the perimeter of the store such as produce, fresh dairy products, fresh meat, fish and poultry and eggs are healthy choices.

##### If you chose mostly C's...

You need a new plan. The saying "You can't always judge a book by its cover!" also applies to food. Stores want you to buy those impulse items at the checkout stand but they usually are not items that you or your family needs. So learn to shop the perimeter and find the healthy foods by learning to read the Nutrition Facts label. Making the best choices for your family is easy as A B C!

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**Just the  
Facts, Ma'am,  
Nutrition  
Facts that is!**



### **The Amazing (Grocery) Race!**

Getting through a grocery shopping trip can be a little like running a race. The supermarket can be a challenging place. And if you add children into the mix it may seem down-right impossible! But reaching the "Finish" line is doable as long as you keep your focus and follow a plan.



### **Make a list.**

The list has your grocery needs: the staples you're out of, and the food you need for upcoming meals. For more tips on shopping list read "Don't risk it, go with a plan!".



### **Shop the perimeter.**

This is where fresh products like fruits, vegetables, low-fat dairy, lean proteins and whole grain breads can be found.

### **Compare unit pricing.**

The biggest package isn't always the best bargain. Looking at the price per ounce will tell you what the best price really is.

### **Choose generic.**

Better yet, try the store brand. Generic and store brand products are cheaper than name-brands and are usually of similar quality.

### **Use coupons wisely.**

Coupons really can save you money. But you have to know how to use them. Clip coupons only for the things you need — staple foods and ingredients — not for processed junk food.

### **Make one trip.**

Each time you enter the grocery store is another chance to spend. By reducing the frequency of your trips, you're also saving time and fuel.

### **Buy from the bulk bins.**

Some stores offer bulk bins filled with baking ingredients, cereal, and spices. When you buy in bulk, you get just the amount you need, and you pay less.



### **Shop on a full stomach.**

Studies show that people who shop when they're hungry buy more.



# School Connections

## Lesson connection

In *Lesson 6, Food Labels*, your child learned about the Nutrition Facts Label. In a class activity, the students learned how to read the Nutrition Facts Label and to how they can use this reliable information to make healthy choices. In the garden, the class created Nutrition Facts Labels and Garden Labels for their vegetables.

## Kitchen Connection

Here's a recipe you can try at home with your child. While you're cooking, try talking about the discussion questions below!

### Veg-Out Chilean Stew (serves 4-6)

3 tablespoons olive oil  
3 cups butternut squash or other winter squash, cut into  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch cubes  
2 medium potatoes, peeled and cut into  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch cubes  
14 ounce can diced tomatoes  
1 cup water  
1 medium red onion, diced  
1 cup collard greens, chopped (spinach can be substituted)  
1 cup mushrooms, sliced  
6 cloves garlic, minced  
 $\frac{1}{4}$  cup basil, roughly chopped  
Parmesan cheese (optional)

### Directions:

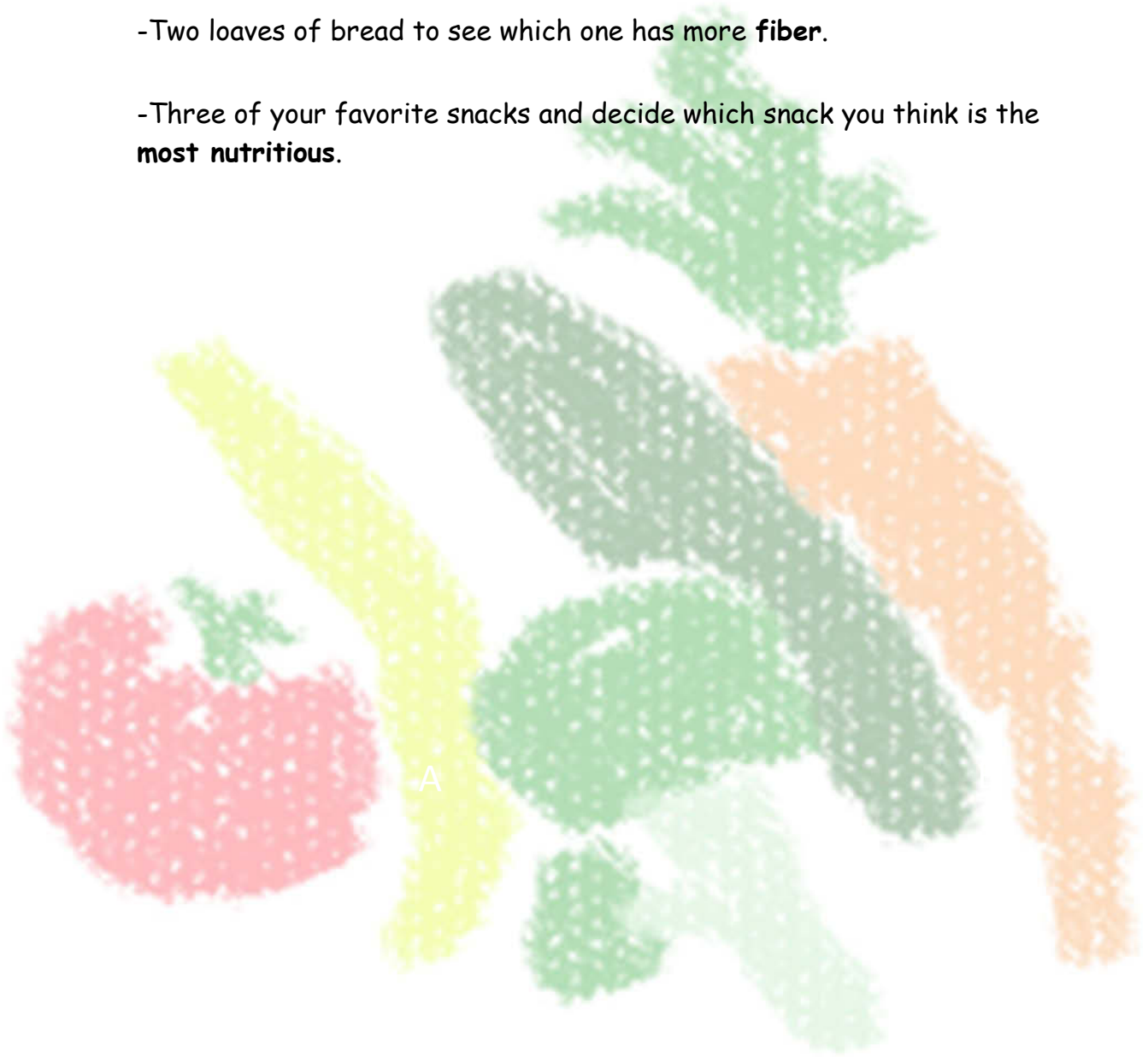
1. Place butternut squash cubes and potato cubes in a microwave safe bowl. Microwave on high for 3 minutes until slightly softened.
2. Heat olive oil in large skillet or saucepan over medium heat. Add onions and until onions are softened, about 3 to 4 minutes. Add the garlic and continue to cook for 30 seconds. Add butternut squash cubes, potato cubes, diced tomatoes, and water. Simmer mixture for 10 minutes until the flavors have combined. Add collard greens and mushrooms and continue to cook about 10 minutes longer. Season with salt and pepper to taste.
3. To serve, ladle stew into bowls and top with basil and parmesan cheese (if using). Enjoy!

**Discussion:** What do you think are the different nutrients that are found in this stew? Where do you think these vegetables are grown? How many servings of vegetables do you think there are there in this stew?

## Family Activity

When you are at home or at the grocery store, compare the labels from:

- Two cereal boxes to see which one has more **iron**.
- Two loaves of bread to see which one has more **fiber**.
- Three of your favorite snacks and decide which snack you think is the **most nutritious**.





## Include your children in grocery shopping.

Use shopping to teach your children about healthy choices. If children are involved in the planning, shopping, and preparation they will be more willing to try new foods. The grocery store is also the perfect place to teach your child how to read labels and develop life-long decision making skills. (See our "Spot the Block" article below.) Children can learn math and reading skills at the grocery store:

- Give them a calculator and have them figure out unit prices.
- Keep track of the total so you can stay on budget.
- Younger children can identify colors, shapes and practice counting skills.



**Don't risk it - go with a plan!**

If you're used to being spur-of-the-moment with your meals, the idea of planning menus for the up-coming week might seem boring and unpleasant, but there are some definite rewards. It saves time, money, decreases the stress that often accompanies meal preparation and helps avoid extra calories. Children enjoy being part of the meal planning process. Including them will develop their planning and decision making skills and encourage healthy eating habits for life.

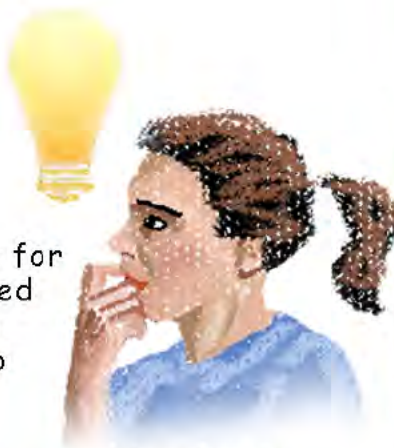
## Spot the Block

Spot the Block is a public education campaign that helps you teach your children how to make healthy choices. Children ages 9 - 13 years old are in a transition phase and are making more of their own food choices. Teach them how to make informed decisions that have lifelong impacts. Knowing how to read the Nutrition Facts Label



will provide you and your children with the information you need to make smart choices. To learn more about the Nutrition Facts Label read our article "Just the Facts Ma'am". To learn more about the Spot the Block program and Nutrition Facts Labels log on with your child to <http://www.fda.gov/spottheblock>

# Here are some tips on meal planning:



**1. Get Ideas** - Ask your children for suggestions; when they are involved in the planning process they'll be more likely to help with meal prep and eat what is prepared.

**2. Consider Shortcuts** - Could you combine fresh and convenience foods to make the meal prep faster? Using frozen and canned foods such as frozen veggies, canned tomatoes or beans makes the meal easier to prepare. Look for simple recipes such as one pot or slow cooker meals that are 30 minutes or less prep time.

**3. Buy Meal Staples** - Have staples in the pantry and add to your shopping list when needed. It will make it easier to create quick meals when you have these items like: whole grain bread, pasta, rice and tortillas, beans, cheese, tomatoes, garlic, onions, milk, cereal, etc on hand. Remember, the food you have in your kitchen will determine how you eat so make healthy choices.

**4. Make a List** - Check your pantry and refrigerator to see what you may already have and make adjustments to your shopping list. Get your children involved, have them check for milk in the refrigerator or cereal in the cupboard and have them choose a fruit or vegetable to add to the list.



**5. Last Step** - Remember to take your list to the store. Keep it in your purse or wallet. That way if you make an unexpected stop at the store you will have it with you! For other great meal planning tips checkout the Meals Matter website.

## Check it out



- Plan the week's meals with your child. Include at least one favorite food at each meal. Have your child suggest at least one new healthy food to try during the week.
- Make a shopping list. Have your child help you find out what is in your pantry or refrigerator. Review the list and create a kid-friendly list of items your child can select at the store.
- Take your child grocery shopping and "Spot the block!"

## Healthy Family Challenge



Make it a goal this week to **Spot the Block** at the grocery store. Have your child pick out their favorite cereal and using the Nutrition Facts Label figure out how much sugar and fiber are in one serving. Then have them find a cereal that is lower in sugar or higher in fiber. Discuss if this is a smart choice and add it to the cart.

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