

How to Conduct a Supermarket Tour

A great way to help consumers learn about healthy eating is to conduct a supermarket tour. Led by a nutrition expert, these tours take consumers up and down the aisles of the supermarket, helping them identify healthful choices for themselves and their families. Here are some helpful hints to conduct a successful tour:

1. Get permission

A supermarket is a public place, but as a courtesy you should get permission from the store manager to conduct supermarket tours. Talk with him or her about the best days and times to conduct your tours, and the approximate number of participants. Keep in mind that the ideal size of a group tour is 5-15 people.

2. Know your audience

If you can, group your tours with people of similar interests and needs—such as moms of young children or a group of adults with hypertension. This allows you to focus your messages and refine them based on each audience.

3. Reinforce the importance of planning ahead

Shoppers can save time and money - and calories - if they spend some time planning ahead before heading to the grocery store. This includes:

- Creating a shopping list and sticking to it. Whether your family is on a calorie budget or a fiscal budget, planning ahead can help reduce unnecessary impulse buys.
- Creating a weekly meal plan. Set aside just 10 minutes each week to create a weekly meal plan for the family then build your grocery list around it.
- Shop the sales. Scan the circulars and clip coupons to find limited-time deals. Sales on fresh, in-season produce can provide a terrific nutritious bang for your buck - and saves money, too. Stock up on non-perishables when those items are on sale as well.

How to Conduct a Supermarket Tour

4. Walk the whole store

The perimeter of most grocery stores is where you typically find perishable items like fresh produce, baked goods and dairy, but don't forget about the nutritious choices found in the aisles:

- Frozen, canned, and 100% juice all count toward daily needs for fruits and vegetables according to the 2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans. Choose a variety of colors.
- Make half your grains whole with nutrient-dense cereal, popcorn, pasta and brown rice.
- Stock up on high-quality proteins such as dried or canned beans, lentils, and canned or pouch tuna fish.
- Cook nutritious meals at home using heart-healthy vegetable oils or low-sodium chicken broth.
- Infuse flavors, minus the sodium, into your favorite recipes by experimenting with dried herbs and spices.

5. Look for labels

All packaged foods are required to have a Nutrition Facts Panel with information about calories, serving size, nutrient content, ingredients and more. This information can help consumers gauge the healthfulness of the product and whether it can fit into their family's regular diet.

Consumers who want the most essential information quickly and easily can also look for the Facts Up Front label, which is a voluntary label used by an increasing number of food manufacturers and retailers. Facts Up Front takes the most important information directly from the Nutrition Facts Panel and brings it to the front of the package.

- Facts Up Front shows calories per serving and information on three nutrients to limit in the diet: saturated fat, sodium and sugar.
- Facts Up Front labels may also have information on one or two nutrients that should be consumed as part of a healthy diet. These "encouraged" nutrients will only appear on a package if the product contains more than 10 percent of the daily value per serving of the nutrient and meets the FDA requirements for a "good source."
- Your clients can use Facts Up Front labels to quickly identify products that help them meet their nutrition goals, from cutting calories to increasing fiber intake to reducing sodium in their diet.
- For more information about Facts Up Front, including consumer resources and an interactive label, visit www.FactsUpFront.org.