

PURCHASING

Healthy and safe eating begins with choosing what foods you buy. So, let us start with purchasing food from the market.

SHOP SMART

FRUITS & VEGETABLES

DO Buy

- Fresh, seasonal and locally available vegetables and fruits at the right stage of maturity
- Green leafy vegetables that are crisp and fresh, The darker the colour, the better it is in terms of nutrition benefits
- Roots and tubers such as carrots, turnips, beets, sweet potatoes that feel heavy and are firm to touch. Smaller sized are usually tastier,
- Potatoes should have unwrinkled skin. Dirt on potatoes can be a sign of freshness because they are washed before storage.
- Onions should be heavy and firm
- Fruits that are firm to touch, unblemished, fresh and clean. In case of citrus fruits, choose juicy and succulent ones, which are heavy for their size. Green spots are allso fine.
- Grapes should be firm, plump and firmly attached to the stems. Stems when green and flexible indicate freshness versus dry and brittle ones

DON'T Buy

- Overripe, blemished/darkened, bruised or insect infested vegetables and fruits
- Green leafy vegetables with wilted or yellow leaves, mushy texture, unpleasant odour, slimy, fuzzy or mouldy growth
- Roots and tubers that are shrivelled, soft/pulpy, green and sprouted
- Green or sprouted potatoes as they could be toxic
- Onions that are squishy on the inside or have black powder on the scales or are sprouted
- Fruits that are pulpy, shrivelled and overripe/rotting
- Grapes should not be wet, mouldy or shrivelled, loose and fallen off the bunch. This means they are very ripe.

SNF ALERT!

If food is spoiled or looks doubtful, it is best to throw it away immediately and wash the container thoroughly. Never taste such doubtful food to check if it is spoiled. Eating even a small amount of spoiled food can be a health hazard.

MILK AND MILK PRODUCTS

Buying Milk and milk products

- Pasteurised milk and milk products, as they are safer.
- Packaged and sealed milk or milk from authorised milk depots.

- Preferably fortified milk with the logo on the packet.
- Fresh cheese and cottage cheese or paneer, preferably packaged and sealed, if purchasing from the market.
- It is preferable to prepare curd at home. If purchasing, buy packaged curd. Check the date of manufacture and ensure that the 'Best before' date has not lapsed.

avoid Buying milk and milk products

- Unpasteurised milk
- Milk that is discoloured, stringy, sour in taste or curdled, with unnatural odour
- Loose milk and curd
- Cheese and cottage cheese or paneer that is slimy to touch, has creamy yellowish discolouration, or bad odour
- If the packaging of the product is not sealed properly, or is puffed
- If the expiry date or 'best before' date on the packet has lapsed

TIPS

While shopping, pick perishable foods (milk, fresh, meat, fish or frozen packs) last to avoid spoilage.

PULSES AND CEREALS: WHEAT FLOUR (ATTA), RICE, SEMOLINA (SOOJI OR RAWA) ETC.

DO Buy

- Preferably packaged and sealed grains
- Fortified wheat flour and rice (look for the sign)
- Even sized and clean grains.

DON'T Buy

- Grains with:
- Clumps, musty smell or cottony growth,
- Unpleasant odour
- Stones, dirt
- Insect infestation

FATS AND OILS; OILSEEDS AND NUTS

DO Buy

- Preferably packaged fats, oils and ghee.
- Fortified oil with logo on the packet,
- Clear and transparent, free-flowing with natural aroma.
- Preferably packaged oilseeds and nuts with packaging intact.

DON'T Buy

- Oils sold loose, especially mustard oil
- Viscous or very thick and dark or used oil with suspended impurities.
- Nuts and oilseeds/powders with rancid smell
- Insect infested/mouldy groundnuts.

CONDIMENTS AND SPICES

DO Buy

- Packaged ground spices
- Intact packaging and contents when buying whole spices (chillies, cardamom)
- Buy double fortified salt. Look for the logo to identify it

DON'T Buy

- Spices and condiments with:
- Cottony growth
- Unpleasant odour
- Presence of insects and powder in whole spices, mould growth and artificial/bright colours
- Clumps in ground spices

EGGS

DO Buy

- Eggs with shells that are clean and intact.

DON'T Buy

- Eggs with shells that are dirty and discoloured, or soiled with droppings.
- Eggs with cracked shells
- Eggs that float in water
- Broken eggs with blood spot/meat spot/foul odour

MEAT, POULTRY AND FISH

DO Buy

- Fresh fish that is shiny, wet and firm to touch and which bounces back when pressed with a finger.
- Fish with gills that are intact, bright and pink in colour.
- Fish with clear eyes and flesh,
- Meat that has pink flesh.
- Lean meat with less cartilage and bone.

- If purchasing pre-cut or packaged meat, check the temperature of the chilled storage unit.
- Check that the 'Best before' date has not lapsed

DON'T Buy

- Fish with flesh on which depression remains when pressed with a finger or flesh that becomes soft and falls apart or flabby flesh that separates from the bones
- Fish with grey or green gills
- Fish with dull, sunken eyes
- Fish with foul odour and very few scales left on the fish, if the fish is scally
- Meat and poultry with:
- Tough, fibrous flesh with more fat and bone
- Discolouration
- Putrid smell
- Slimy appearance and touch
- Damaged packaging

SNF ALERT!

Separate raw meat, poultry, seafood, and eggs from other foods in your grocery shopping cart/grocery bags.

FROZEN FOODS

DO Buy

- Packaged frozen foods and check that the date of expiry has not lapsed.
- Food that is frozen solid. Thaw only as much quantity as you need

DON'T Buy

- If product has a large amount of ice crystals, foul smell or is discoloured.
- If packaging is soiled, leaking or damaged.
- If food has thawed.

SNF ALERT!

- Do not purchase products marked as "Keep refrigerated", "Keep chilled" or "Keep frozen" that have not been stored under adequate refrigeration.
- Take food that needs refrigeration home quickly and place it in the refrigerator or freezer promptly.

PACKAGED/CANNED/BOTTLED FOODS

DO Buy

- Intact packets.
- Sealed bottles.
- Foods with uniform colour and consistency.
- Check dates of manufacture and expiry.

DON'T Buy

- Deflated packets (with less air), suspended. impurities, dented, bulging, and leaking packets/cans.
- Packets having contents with putrid smell, brine/ syrup, or which look cloudy/bubbly or slimy.

DECODE FOOD LABELS

Being able to understand and correctly interpret the labels on food items is vitally important to be able to make good food choices and prepare healthy food in your kitchen.

LOOK FOR THESE LOGOS

ISI mark for packaged drinking and mineral water and certain processed foods such as infant food, milk. and skimmed milk powder.

AGMARK for all agricultural products such as vegetable oil pulses, cereals, spices, honey, fruits and vegetables

DID YOU KNOW?

"Fortified" food means essential nutrients such as Vitamins and minerals have been added to the food. Eating fortified wheat flour, rice, milk, oil, and salt helps to meet your daily requirement for nutrients that help you grow, fight infections and stay strong and healthy. There is no difference between fortified and regular foods in appearance, taste, smell, storing and cooking methods. For more information visit www.ffrc.fssai.gov.in.

LIST OF INGREDIENTS and FOOD ADDITIVES

- Carefully check the list of ingredients.
- Common allergy-causing ingredients include casein in milk, tree nuts including peanuts, eggs, fish, shellfish, soybean, and proteins in wheat. Avoid food products that include these ingredients if the consumer is sensitive to them. Consuming these even in small quantities can cause severe allergic reactions in some people.
- Check the food additives for artificial/permitted flavouring and colours. Class I preservatives are preferred over class II

INSTRUCTIONS FOR USE:

Read instructions for use if mentioned. Make sure you follow these instructions for best results.

STORAGE CONDITIONS:

- Read instructions for storage such as where to keep the food product and for how long...

DECLARATIONS:

- Read any claims and declarations such as "free from Argemone oil".

SNF ALERT!

- Always check the 'Date of Manufacture' and 'Date of Expiry' or 'Best Before' date for freshness
- Be sure to consume foods before the 'Best Before' date or before the 'Expiry Date' has lapsed

USE NUTRITION FACTS TO CHOOSE PROCESSED FOODS WISELY

ENERGY:

- This is where you find the calories per serving, given in kcal, which stands for kilocalories,
- If the packet contains two servings and the calorie content is 100 calories per serving then you consume 200 calories if you eat the whole packet.
- Fat-free does not mean calorie-free, Lower fat items may have as many calories as full-fat items..

FATS & CHOLESTEROL:

- To help reduce your risk of heart disease, use the label to select foods that are lowest in saturated fats, trans fats and cholesterol

NUTRITIONAL FACTS (Approximate composition per 100g when packed)

Energy-900 kcal

Protein-0 g

Carbohydrates-0 g

Sugar - 0 g

Cholesterol-0 mg

Added Vitamin A*

750 mcg

Added Vitamin D*

5 mcg

Fats

Saturated Fatty Acids - 12g

Poly Unsaturated Fatty acids - 67 g

Mono Unsaturated Fatty Acids - 21 g

Trans Fatty Acids - 0 g

PROTEIN:

Look for foods that are rich in proteins. Proteins are the building blocks of our body.

CARBOHYDRATES:

Check for sugars especially added sugars, Limit sugars, impecially added sugars, to reduce your risk of obesity

SODIUM:

To help reduce your risk of high blood pressure, select foods that are lowest in sodium content.

VITAMINS & MINERALS

Select foods that are rich in a variety of Vitamins and minerals as they help us fight infections and keep us healthy.

DIETARY FIBRE:

Check the amount of fibre. Fibre improves digestive functioning and overall health.

SERVING SIZE and NET WEIGHT

- Check the serving size. It may be given as the number of servings per container/packet or the weight/volume in g/ml.
- Check the net weight of the packet. This is the total amount of product contained in the packet.
- The Nutrition Facts Label information is generally based on one serving/per 100g/100ml, but many packages may contain more than one serving or more than 100g or 100ml.
- Look at how many servings/g/ml you are actually consuming. If there are two servings/200g/200ml in one packet and you eat the whole packet, you have consumed double the calories and nutrients mentioned in the Nutrition Facts.

GUIDELINES FOR DAILY ALLOWANCE (GDA) or DAILY VALUE % (DV%):

- Some foods display Guidelines for Daily Allowance or Daily Values. This tells you what percentage of the daily requirements of particular nutrients is fulfilled by that food.
- DV is based on a 2000-calorie diet. If a nutrient's DV is listed as 20% then it meets 20% of the total amount of that
- nutrient you need per day to function properly.

- This is a helpful way to check if the food is high or low in a nutrient value. A DV of 5% or less means the food item is low in that nutrient and 20% or more means it is high in that nutrient.

SNF ALERT!

Soups and salads are not always low in calories. Do make it a point to read the label of food packets for such information. Thick soups containing white sauce, cream, starch, coconut milk, noodles etc. are rich in calories. Packaged soups also have high sodium, and thus, are not healthy. This is also true for salads with rich dressings like mayonnaise.

TIPS

A great way to help the environment, while fulfilling our food needs is by using products that can be recycled. Simply look for the recyclable sign on the packet before making the purchase.

DID YOU KNOW?

For those who would like to consume genuine organic food, FSSAI has launched an initiative called 'Jaivik Bharat' to ensure genuineness of food labelled and sold as 'organic'. The 'Jaivik Bharat' logo, a common identity for organic food, helps you identify authentic organic food. An 'Indian Organic Integrity Database' has been developed and is available through the Jaivik Bharat portal at www.jaivaikbharat.fssai.gov.in

BE A SMART CONSUMER

Food advertisements can sometimes make claims that require clarifications so that you can make healthy choices.

FOOD

Fats/Oils

Claim:

- "This oil is good for diabetes" or other diseases or "this oil is heart friendly".
- "This oil does not contain cholesterol"
- 'Light oil' or 'Lite oil'
- "This oil contains no saturated fats"
- Cholesterol-free label
- "Low-fat" or 'Non-fat' labels.

Clarification:

- All oils are 100% fat, and therefore, should be consumed in recommended quantities only.
- No plant-based oil contains cholesterol anyway.
- Some oils are more easily absorbed than others but 1 gm of any oil will give the same amount of energy, i.e., 9 kcal.
- This is not true because every kind of oil has some percentage of saturated fats, even though some oils contain more saturated fats than others.

- Products marked 'cholesterol free' do not contain cholesterol but care has to be taken to check for total fats, especially saturated and trans fats, as they can increase cholesterol levels in the body. Our body synthesizes cholesterol. Also, vegetable oils do not contain cholesterol, only animal fats do.

Cereals

Claim: Bread that is marked 'brown bread'

Clarification: Brown bread need not mean whole wheat bread. Brown bread is often coloured with caramel and may have only a small percentage of wheat flour. To be genuinely labelled 'whole wheat bread', it must be at least 50% whole wheat.

Sugars

Claim: 'Sugar-free' and 'Brown sugar' labels

Clarification: People often associate sugar free foods with lower calories, and thus, consider them beneficial for diabetics and weight watchers. Sugar-free foods could actually be loaded with fats and refined cereals (refined flour, starch). Sugars could also be present in different forms (malitol, fructose, corn syrup, molasses) 'Brown sugar' is often sucrose, tinted with caramel.

DID YOU KNOW?

The Food Smart Consumer Portal of FSSAI contains guidance notes for consumers, information on consumer rights as well as a grievance redressal mechanism. Visit the Food Smart Consumer Portal at <http://foodsmart.fssai.gov.in/>.

BUILD A HEALTHY 'MARKET-BASKET'

Here are some useful pointers for a healthy market-basket when you buy.

CEREALS AND PULSES

- Buy whole grain cereals, whole and split legumes and pulses as they are rich in essential nutrients.
- Buy a variety of cereals such as oats or jai, whole-wheat flour, muesli, cornflakes, bajra or pearl millet, ragi or finger millet, jowar or sorghum millet, brown rice, sabudana or tapioca sago and barley or jau.
- Use a combination of channa or processed soya flour with wheat flour to enhance the protein quality as well as additional health benefits.

Whole grains are high in dietary fibre, low in fat, and rich in Vitamin E, iron, selenium, zinc, and B-complex Vitamins.

SNF ALERT!

Soya bean contains trypsin inhibitors, which reduce the digestibility of proteins. Therefore, only processed (adequately heat-treated) soya flour should be consumed or added to wheat flour or any other millets. The heat from the griddle/tawa is not sufficient to destroy trypsin inhibitors.

FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

- Buy seasonal vegetables and fruits and choose a rainbow of colourful fruits and vegetables.
- When buying fruit juices, choose 100% juices without added sugar.

Fruits and vegetables provide dietary fibre, folate, and Vitamins such as Vitamin C, Vitamin A, some minerals, anti-oxidants, and water.

DID YOU KNOW?

Citrus fruits such as oranges and lemons are not the only rich sources of Vitamin C. A bowl of sprouts provides more Vitamin C than an orange. Guava, amla and green chillies provide more Vitamin C than any other citrus fruit.

OILS AND FATS

Buy Vitamin A and Vitamin D fortified oil.

Buy and use two or more different types of fats/oils/ghee for daily cooking.

- To reduce risk of heart disease, substitute margarine, vanaspati, palm oil etc. which are rich in saturated and trans fat with healthy vegetable oils such as groundnut oil, mustard oil, sesame oil (til) and coconut oil.
- Include nuts and oil seeds like walnuts and flax seeds in your diet for omega-3 fatty acids.

SNF ALERT!

Many people suffer from Vitamin D deficiency. Vitamin D is manufactured by the skin on exposure to sunlight. Very few foods contain Vitamin D, which is essential for the absorption of calcium in the body. Therefore, consuming milk and oil fortified with Vitamin D will help you meet your requirements.

MILK AND MILK PRODUCTS

- Buy Vitamin A and Vitamin D fortified milk and a variety of milk products such as curd, cottage cheese/paneer, or cheese.
- Choose whole milk and cheese for growing children, pregnant and lactating women. Choose low fat milk and cheese if you are watching your weight or are at risk of problems as a result of obesity, cardiovascular diseases or diabetes.
- For the dairy or lactose intolerant- you can substitute dairy products with soy and soy products (tofu, miso, soy milk, etc).

Milk is a very good source of high-quality protein, calcium and phosphorus and Vitamin B2.

SNF ALERT!

Vegetarian diets that include cereals, legumes, soy, dairy, nuts, seeds, whole grains and vegetables can easily meet your protein, Vitamin and mineral requirements.

However, Vitamin B 12 is the only Vitamin that is naturally present only in foods of animal origin. Therefore, vegetarians usually need to supplement this Vitamin in their diets. Eating wheat flour and rice fortified with Vitamin B 12 can help meet the body's nutritional needs.

MEAT, FISH, POULTRY AND EGGS

- Buy seasonal fish.
- Eggs provide good nutritional value for money because they contain high quality protein and are easily affordable.
- Choose lean cuts of meat if you are watching your weight.

Meat, fish, poultry and eggs are rich sources of protein, iron, zinc, and B-complex Vitamins.

DID YOU KNOW?

Fish is rich in long-chain Omega-3 fatty acids. Frequent consumption of fish helps protect against several chronic diseases including heart disease and diabetes. If you eat seafood, eat more oily sea fish, which is cheaper, healthier and also rich in Vitamin D.

SCREEN WHAT YOU EAT

Your food may be adulterated with undesirable and harmful substances, which can make you sick.

Being a smart consumer means being able to identify these adulterants in foods.

For some simple, easy to follow tests for common adulterants, please refer to the DART Book- Detecting Adulterants with Rapid Testing released by FSSAI.

It can be downloaded at the FSSAI website: <http://www.fssai.gov.in/home/capacity-building/FSSAI-Books.html>