

Avoiding the aisles at the grocery store can help keep off unwanted pounds

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(PhysOrg.com) -- Shopping the perimeter of your local grocery store and avoiding the aisles will give you a head start on fighting the battle of the bulge.

“In most grocery stores, the aisles are filled with canned goods, frozen and boxed dinners that are loaded with fat and extra unnecessary calories,” said Gaye Lynn Hicks, RD, LD, with The Methodist [Weight Management](#) Center in Houston. “The perimeter features fruits, [vegetables](#), lean meats and other healthy fair.”

If you simply cannot avoid going down the aisles, it’s important to be aware of food labels and find foods with the fewest amount of ingredients -- three to four instead of 6 to 8.

“The top 5 ingredients listed make up the food, the rest are preservatives and additives to give it flavor. Many times this leads to additional fat and calories,” Hicks said. “It should be a red flag if you see they are adding a large amount of sugars and fats. Women only need 200 calories of added sugar per day and men 300 calories.”

Your body gets all the nutrients, sugars and fats it needs from the daily requirements of fruits and vegetables, lean meats, dairy and [whole grains](#) . All of these items are located around the perimeter of most grocery stores.

“If 90 percent of what is in your shopping cart is from around the

perimeter of the store, you are eating a clean, [healthy diet](#),” Hicks said.

For instance, she said, low-fat milk offers the same proteins and calcium as whole milk, but you are cutting out all the extra saturated fat. Lean chicken, without the skin, will give you the protein you need without the fat. Five to 10 servings a day of fruits and vegetables will also help you keep off unwanted pounds. Some healthy items will be found down the aisles such as brown rice, whole wheat bread, and some spices. In fact, when it comes to spices and seasonings, do it yourself. This way you have more control over what is being put into your food.

Provided by The Methodist Hospital System

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