How to Go Grocery Shopping with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder

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Grocery Shopping With ADHD: How to Make an ADHD Grocery List

No matter what diet you choose to follow for your attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) one thing is for sure: many of us find grocery shopping to be our worst nightmare.

Is there anyone out there who likes to grocery shop? If there is, I have never met them. Grocery shopping can be the most time consuming and aggravating of all chores whether you have ADHD or not.

Why Is Grocery Shopping so Overwhelming for the ADHD Brain?

I think part of the problem has to do with our impulsive natures. We can get into trouble both financially and nutritionally when we start tossing all those shiny prepackaged foods into our carts.

Too many choices can be another factor that makes shopping so difficult. If you steer clear of prepackaged items, this can be less of a problem, but there will still be choices. Sometimes just choosing what kind of apples can be overwhelming.

Crowds can be a problem for some of us, making us anxious and more likely to throw junk food into our carts.

Before we can tackle the obstacles we face in the actual store, we have to tackle a couple of other important steps first.

Tips for Creating an ADHD Grocery List and Meal Plan

Meal planning might just be a bigger chore for me than the actual shopping. Maybe I'm fickle, but I can plan all I want but something is going to happen to throw a wrench into my weekly plans.

There will be something that comes up at the last minute or more than likely I'm just not going to be in the mood to cook what I have planned for a specific evening.

Planning Meals When You Have ADHD

Different people choose to follow different nutritional plans, and for the most part, there is no right or wrong answer here. Deciding what works best for yourself and your family is a must; eating meals that nourish your body and make you feel your best.

I try to follow a plant-based, whole foods meal plan as much as possible, but there are plenty of times I fall short of this goal. I do know when I take the time to plan meals and stick to my list I have a much better chance of

following the nutritional plan that is best for me.

Pick a day during the week, at a certain time, and sit down to plan your meals for the coming week. I use cookbooks to help or search for recipes on sites such as Pinterest. I note the ingredients needed and add any I don't currently have to my grocery list.

Meals should be balanced and follow the rule of half the plate being fruits and vegetables, ¼ protein and ¼ carbohydrate.

I utilize crockpot recipes or meals I can prepare with leftovers for the days when I know we will be busy or late get home for one reason or another.

It helps if you don't just plan dinner. Try to plan for breakfast, lunch, and even snacks; any meals you will eat at home. This way you are never caught with nothing in the house to make a healthy meal.

An ADHD Food List for Adults and Children

An ADHD meal plan should be rich in proteins and vitamins and avoid sugar, processed foods, and artificial colorings. Some also choose to eliminate dairy, gluten, and all sweeteners.

Choose whole grains which are rich in fiber and prevent blood sugars from plummeting. Protein also helps prevent those surges.

These three minerals are found in lean meats and poultry, seafood, nuts, soy, and fortified cereals.

- Zinc: low levels are linked to inattention
- Magnesium: used to make neurotransmitters involved in attention and concentration
- Iron: low levels are linked with cognitive deficits and ADHD

Staples on my grocery lists include:

- Fresh fruits and vegetables including spinach, broccoli, cauliflower, rutabaga, zucchini, carrots, potatoes, celery, onions, tomatoes, cucumbers, apples, oranges, and bananas
- Grains such as barley, brown rice, quinoa, and couscous
- Almonds
- Natural peanut butter
- Chicken breast, ground turkey, fish (We try to limit meals with meat to two or three times per week)
- Whole wheat pasta
- Steel cut oatmeal
- Dry or canned beans such as kidney, cannellini, garbanzo, and black beans

How Can You Avoid Grocery Store Overwhelm?

Here are some tips that can make your trip to the store a little bit easier.

- Plan meals in advance.
- Shop one time per week on the same day and time if possible and stick to one store. The only exception I make to this is that I try to buy as much of my produce as possible from a local farmer's market.
- If you don't want to buy it, don't touch it. You are more likely to throw something unplanned into your cart if you pick it up to look at it.
- Organize your list into categories for easier shopping.
- Stick to the perimeter of the store as much as possible. The unhealthier, prepackaged foods lurk in the middle.
- Time yourself. Try to beat a certain time.
- Budget and pay in cash to reduce impulsive spending. I have found paying in cash dramatically reduces

the amount of extra, unwanted products I come home with.
- Never shop hungry.
- Keep a whiteboard in the kitchen or a list attached to the fridge so you can enter in items when you are running low on them. Add these items to your list when you plan your meals for the week.

Grocery shopping may never become a chore you enjoy, but with a little planning, it can become somewhat less painful.

I prefer to use a plain old-fashioned piece of paper for my grocery list. There are apps out there that can do the job too. My sister keeps all her recipes in the app Evernote, along with the recipes and shopping lists. You can also find printable grocery lists online.

I arrange my grocery list into categories, and usually, those categories correspond to certain areas of the store too. I knew a woman once who knew what was in each aisle of the store where she shopped, and she arranged her list by the aisle numbers of the store. Whatever you will use consistently is the best option for your organization.

When I’ve done my planning and have my list ready, things go much more smoothly than when I try to wing it. I come home with wholesome foods and feel less frazzled too. It’s definitely worth the time and effort to prepare.