

The Whole Foods Approach to Diet and Nutrition

Make it your goal to eat more whole foods – nature’s own food packaging system!

What’s a *whole food*? You can think of whole foods as complete, naturally-packaged foods. They’re foods that have *not* undergone extensive processing before reaching the marketplace. The simplest examples are fruits, vegetables, nuts and other *intact foods* that you find in the market.

For example, a whole apple has a recognizable round-shape, size, and colorful outer skin. Whole apples have fiber in their skin and meat, and are good sources of vitamins and several other nutrients that benefit health. In contrast, without clear labeling, you may not even know that finely processed applesauce originally came from apples.

Other examples of whole foods are items *made from whole foods*, like whole-wheat flour and whole-wheat products with limited or no preservatives and additives.

Tips to Identify Nutritious Whole Food Sources:

- ✓ The word “whole” on breads, pastas, baked products
- ✓ 100% fruit
- ✓ No added sugars
- ✓ Low-sodium
- ✓ Baked goods with ≥ 2 -3 grams fiber per serving
- ✓ No additives or preservatives
- ✓ Made from whole ripe tomatoes, cranberries, raspberries, etc.
- ✓ Ingredient labels where you recognize all the food names and seasonings

Foods you may want to limit:

- Foods with many unrecognizable ingredients
- Foods with shelf-lives of months or years
- Bleached, enriched white flour
- *Artificially colored or flavored*
- Labels with “contains real *bits* of “xyz” fruit”
- Foods with sugar or high-fructose corn syrup in the first 2-3 ingredients

With our fast-paced lives today, time is indeed limited. But making a commitment to incorporate more whole foods, and less refined, processed foods is important to your overall health and nutrition.

References:

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