Grocery Shopping and Meal Planning Tips with MTBI

1. Accumulate a well-stocked pantry and freezer of healthful choices to minimize trips to the grocery store. (TIP: Have a friend or family member do this shopping for you since replenishing staples can be more time consuming than a quick trip to buy perishables.)

2. Keep an easily accessible "living" shopping list handy to jot down perishable food items during the week. (TIP: Organize this list according the aisles/perimeter locations in the grocery store to minimize shopping time and conserve your energy.)

3. Think about what a healthful plate should look like and check your cart. Between what you have stocked at home in your pantry, fridge and freezer and what goes in your cart:

   a. Are half of your choices veggies and fruit of various colors?
   b. Are one quarter of your choices grains – and mostly whole grains?
   c. Is the other quarter of your choices protein foods such as poultry, fish, lean meats and/or plant-based sources like beans, nuts, and seeds?
   d. Are you using healthy oils like avocado, canola and olive oil for cooking and in salad dressings? Are you avoiding trans fats and limiting processed meats like bacon, cold cuts and sausages?
   e. Are your beverages and snacks free of added-sugars?

4. Keep your meals simple and familiar to limit time referencing recipes and to avoid hard-to-find ingredients. My motto for meal planning is *"Some (but not much) assembly may be required."*

5. Eat before you go grocery shopping. Try not to shop when you are feeling hungry or thirsty. This may lead to more impulsive buying of less healthful choices and trigger a headache.

6. Plan to shop when the stores are less crowded to avoid long checkout lines, noise and maneuvering a cart around other shoppers. Or avoid stores altogether by using a food delivery service offered by some grocery stores. Order online and have the food arrive at your doorstep.

7. If necessary bring earplugs or a noise-cancelling headset to drown out noises that may be unavoidable while shopping.

Terry L. McArthur MS, RDN, CPT
Registered Dietitian Nutritionist & Certified Personal Trainer
Email: terrylynnmcarthur@gmail.com