

Free Kitchen Makeover: Easy Tips for a Heart Healthy Household

Create a Healthy Environment in Your home by doing a makeover in your kitchen cabinets and refrigerator

Tip #1 Purpose of the Makeover: It is important to do a makeover in your kitchen so that you can stay focused on your goal of developing a healthy lifestyle. It's important that your daily habits agree with your goals. In order to be successful on your journey, a supportive environment is a must. Knowledge is power. Below are a few tips that will help you to be successful in your life style changes. The goal is to eat clean and healthy.

Tip #2 Shop the produce aisle first: Fill your cart up with all of the heart healthy foods like dark, green leafy vegetables and seasonal fruits. A list of clean and dirty fruits is provided below. They explain what fruits should be bought organic and which ones can be bought conventional.

Tip #3 How to shop the middle aisle of your grocery store: Avoid buying those prepackaged items that are usually in the middle aisles of your grocery store. These items like crackers, breads, cereals, cookies, coffee creamers, microwave popcorn, refrigerated cookie and pie dough, peanut butter, etc. usually have those ingredients that read like a chemistry lab that you can't pronounce. My motto is: If you can't pronounce it, don't eat it, it doesn't belong in your body! If you don't recognize the ingredients then your cells won't either! These items usually have hydrogenated oil and other additives in them which are used to extend the shelf life that are harmful to your health. The goal is to eat foods that you and your cells can recognize as food. I recommend that you restock your pantry and refrigerator with those items that you eat on a daily basis organic.

Tip #4 Learn how to read food labels: The ingredients are listed in order of importance. The first three are the most important and indicate that the food is made up of mostly these ingredients. The last few ingredients at the bottom of the list are in the food in small amounts.

Tip #5 Be Aware of terms like hydrogenated oils, partially hydrogenated oils and transfat: Transfat is listed on the ingredients list as hydrogenated oils or partially hydrogenated oils. However, according to the FDA if the transfat found in food is less than 0.5% the manufacturer can say "no transfat" on the label. If you see no transfat, look at the ingredients list for hydrogenated or partially hydrogenated. Transfats have been known to cause heart disease. It's wise to be a smart consumer and again, buy those foods that you eat on a regular basis organic.

Tip #6 Sweeteners that add calories but has no nutritional value: If most of your carbohydrates in your food come from sugar, then you want to avoid those foods. Avoid sugary terms like: fructose, sucrose, dextrose. Avoid artificial sweeteners as in sucralose, saccharin, aspartame, and acesulfame. When consumed in large quantities, these items can be dangerous for your health. I'm being political here when I use the word "avoid." What I really mean is get it out of your diet! Your body doesn't need ingredients like these, not even in moderation. It's just plain bad for you!

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Tips #7 Food Additives: Are substances like vitamins and minerals that manufacturers add to foods to enrich them. Some additives are preservatives that help to keep food from spoiling and extend the shelf life of food i.e. sugar, salt, and dyes and these are the ones that you should be concerned about. Artificial food coloring: blues #1, #2, #3, green #3, red #3 and yellow #6 may cause cancer.

Monosodium glutamate (MSG) is a flavor enhancer has been known to cause many different health risks. Individuals have experienced headaches, nausea, and difficulty breathing after consuming this additive.

Tip # 8 Canned goods: Try to get BPA free cans. BPA (Bisphenol A.) is an industrial chemical that has been use to make certain plastics and resins. Although the FDA states that it is safe in low doses, BPA can seep into the food which can have harmful effects on the body. Try to buy frozen vegetables over canned, if you can't afford fresh.

Tip #9 Whole Grains: Not all grains are equal. Make sure the ingredient list says 100%. If it doesn't say 100% it's a counterfeit. It should deliver at least 2-3 grams of fiber per serving. Don't be fooled by the word multigrain. Multigrain could simply mean that it is a combination of refined grains which are missing most of the fiber. The fiber in 100% whole grain is important in lowering your cholesterol, reducing your risk for heart disease, stabilizing your blood sugar and a host of other health benefits.

Tip #10 Choose nitrate free foods: Additives like sodium nitrate and potassium nitrite are found in hot dogs, lunch meats and cured, smoked meats such as bacon, ham, and smoked turkey. When heated nitrite creates small amounts of cancer-causing chemicals called nitrosamines during cooking. Cured meats and processed deli meats are usually high in salt and fat and should be avoided.

Tip #11 Bypass the deli counter (nothing there but salt and fat) and hang a left to the diary aisle where you will get your supply of Greek style yogurt, almond milk, low sodium cottage cheese, kefir milk and a few other items that will support your lifestyle. These are foods that say "life" to your cells.

Tip #12 Check out time: Once you leave the diary aisle, don't turn to the right or the left. If at all possible bypass the middle aisle, if you must go there, keep in mind the above tips. Keep your eyes fixed on the checkout counter and head to your nearest whole foods market to complete your shopping for the week.

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Some fruits and vegetables are classified as clean or dirty, meaning those fruits and vegetables that have a thin skin covering pick up pesticides easily and should be bought organic while others with a thicker skin-which prevents the pesticides from penetrating them-are considered clean (my dirty and clean fruit lists are provided below).

Dirty Fruits and Vegetables-try to buy these organic

Apples
Celery
Sweet bell peppers
Peaches
Strawberries
Nectarines
Grapes
Spinach
Lettuce
Cucumbers
Blueberries
Potatoes

Clean Fruits and Vegetables

Onions
Sweet Corn
Pineapples
Avocado
Cabbage
Sweet Peas
Asparagus
Mangoes
Eggplant
Kiwi
Cantaloupe
Sweet Potatoes
Grapefruit
Watermelon
Mushrooms

Annie

Empowering individuals to change their minds, to change their eating habits and transform their lifestyle