

# Are you a Healthy Shopper?

Does where you buy your food determine how healthy you are? A recent study suggests that there may be a link between the type of store where you do most of your food shopping and your weight and the health of your diet overall.



## Which stores were better?

Some of the results were what you might expect. People who shopped often at convenience stores ate fewer fruits and vegetables. Convenience stores don't tend to have large produce departments, so this makes sense. Fruits and vegetables were a bigger part of the diets of people who frequented supermarkets and specialty stores. Overall diet quality was highest in those who shopped at food co-ops. From a weight perspective, people who shopped at specialty stores and farmers markets tended to weigh less and people who shopped at food co-ops had smaller waists.



## Which comes first?

Now the question is, do healthy people tend to shop at certain stores or do certain shopping habits make you healthier? This recent study isn't able to say for sure, but it seems that it could be both. Someone who eats more fruits and vegetables is likely to seek out stores with more variety of high quality produce. On the other hand, in store marketing and promotions can influence the types of foods shoppers buy regardless of the reason they ended up at the store in the first place.



## Bottom Line

Shifting your shopping habits may offer a way to improve your health. If you find yourself coming up short on fruits and vegetables, consider spending more of your shopping time and money at stores with better produce sections or at farmers' markets. If stops at the local convenience store are a regular part of your routine, try giving a little more time to planning your big shopping trips to stock up on a variety of healthful foods. Having the right foods on hand is a great way to make better food choices the easy choices.

#### REFERENCES:

1. Leia M Minaker, Dana L Olstad, Mary E Thompson, Kim D Raine, Pat Fisher and Lawrence D Frank. Associations between frequency of food shopping at different store types and diet and weight outcomes: findings from the NEWPATH study. Public Health Nutrition, available on CJO2016. doi:10.1017/S1368980016000355.  
Written by Jennifer M. Roberts, MS, RD