



FoodFight Pantry Makeover

FoodFight's 8 Tips for Stocking a Healthy Pantry

You can use your newfound food literacy skills to give your pantry a facelift. Essentially, you want to make sure that the staples you grab support your family's health and provide you with the biggest nutritional bang for your buck.

Follow these 8 easy steps:

- **Start with a clean slate:** Clear everything out of your pantry. Many people have lots of staples that they have lost track of. Start grouping things by categories: grains, cereals, spices, nuts, snack foods, etc.
- **Keep it clear:** Where possible, put things in clear containers to make them easy to see and easy to grab. You are much more likely to cook at home if you know what foods are at your fingertips.
- **Follow the FoodFight 5-5-5 rule:** Reading food labels can be CONFUSING – too much information – much of it unclear and uninformative. The 5-5-5 rule helps to put your focus on the numbers that matter – *Sugar, Fiber and number of ingredients*. Take a look at all of your packaged products. Aim for items that have **5 grams of sugar** or less; **5 grams of fiber** or more and **5 ingredients** or less.
- **Become FoodFight detectives:** Help your children to become in your pantry sleuthing. It is easier to encourage healthy eating by helping kids see the way that branding, marketing and advertising try to convince us to consume unhealthy products. Worst culprits tend to be crackers, cookies, chips and any food marketed to kids.
- **Essential building blocks:** With these few items you will always have the building blocks for putting together a quick, nutritious and delicious meal: a) brown rice, b) whole wheat pasta, c) diced tomatoes (preferably organic), d) beans – any kind, e) basic spices.
- **Sweet math:** Let's face it, humans like sugar but too much processed sugar is not good for us. It causes energy spikes and crashes, excess belly fat storage, tooth decay and may contribute to behavioral problems at home and school. We are supposed to consume 6-9 teaspoons per day (according to the American Heart Association but we typically consume more like 30 – 40 teaspoons. 4 grams of sugar = 1 tsp of sugar.
- **Sweet substitutes:** Children (nor adults) should be consuming chemically processed sugar substitutes. They may cause cancer, definitely cause gastrointestinal distress and seem to fuel overeating. Help your family explore natural sugar alternatives: maple syrup, stevia (a plant based sweetener), honey should still be used in moderation but they can help to reset the sugar.
- **Frankenstein in the Fridge:** Use the 5-5-5 rule to clear out the overly processed junk in your fridge. Typical culprits with too much sugar, chemicals and preservatives: commercial yogurts, salad dressing, ketchup, jelly. Make your own dressing – tasty and economical. Buy plain, whole fat yogurt and add fruit, honey, nuts. Buy ketchup without high fructose corn syrup.