

# AVOIDING FAKE FOOD

Since our world is filled with processed foods, it can be a bit difficult to avoid them. Grocery stores are filled with fake foods marketed as “health” foods. Not to mention, we don’t all have convenient access to a Whole Foods or other health food stores to shop at on a weekly basis. Below are a few tips and tricks to help you avoid fake foods and find more real foods – no matter where you shop!

**Read the ingredients label.** Once you learn to check the ingredients list on food products, you’ll be able to easily determine how processed a food is. Avoid foods that are filled with unpronounceable ingredients, chemicals, additives, and sugars. A food product that has five ingredients or less is very lightly processed and usually a healthier choice. Many food products that contain five or more ingredients is more highly processed. The more ingredients, the more processed a food is!

**Switch to 100% whole-grains.** White bread, white rice, and breakfast cereals contain refined carbs, which is loaded with sugars and contains very little nutritional value. When shopping for foods like pastas, rice, cereals, and crackers, be sure to choose the 100% whole-grain options. Just be sure to check the ingredient label to ensure your product is actually made with whole grains.

**Buy more fruits and veggies.** One of the easiest ways to avoid fake foods is by eating meals that are loaded with fruit and veggies. By focusing on fruits and veggies, you’ll naturally reduce the number of fake foods you are consuming.

**Avoid the middle section of a grocery store.** The middle area of most grocery stores is usually where all the processed foods are kept. By shopping around the perimeter of grocery stores, you’ll see more real food options and won’t be as tempted to buy fake foods.

**Don’t be afraid of frozen produce.** Believe it or not, frozen fruits and veggies are just as nutritious as their fresh counterparts! If you don’t have the time to wash and prep your fruits and veggies yourself, buying frozen produce will save you a lot of time and make eating more fruits and veggies easier for you.

**Buy local.** Buying local is an excellent way to ensure you’re eating more real foods. Plus, it’s great for your community as well! Stop shopping at farmer’s markets for fresh produce and lean meats, and visit neighborhood bakeries to find less-processed whole-grain bread.

**DIY.** A lot of your favorite fake foods can become much less processed and a lot healthier when you make them yourself! Snacks like granola bars, trail mix, and smoothies can all be made easily at home. By making these foods yourself, you can control the ingredients. You can even save a few dollars, too!