



Grocery Shopping

Tips for making it easier

This handout offers tips for making grocery shopping easier – to conserve your energy and save you time.

Programs such as Meals on Wheels and services such as home-delivered groceries or pre-made dinners can supplement your grocery needs and make meal planning easier.

Talk to clinic staff about programs or services you can pay for or that you may qualify for.

When you are adjusting to a new disability, doing everyday chores and activities can overwhelm you and make you tired. Try some of these tips to save your energy and work within your physical limits.

Planning Ahead

- Stock up on non-perishable items.
- If you will be using an alternative transportation program, make your reservations at least 48 hours in advance.
- Shop on days when you have fewer commitments and other tasks.
- Plan your trip for a day and time when stores are less crowded. Avoid shopping on weekends, just before holidays, or in the late afternoon when stores are more likely to be crowded.
- Shop at the same store to become familiar with the layout and where items are found.

Making Your Grocery List

- Make your list ahead of time.
- List items you need by food group.
- Reduce a long grocery list to food items you need most if you have a hard time carrying shopping bags.

Pre-shopping Activities

- Carry coupons and money in a fanny pack to free up your hands.
- Pick up a shopping cart or carry basket when you enter the store.
- To move around more freely, you may want to try putting your walking device in the shopping cart.
- Before shopping, ask a clerk for the aisle number and location for any items on your list that you are not sure how to find.

Questions?

Your questions are important. If you have questions or concerns, UWMC clinic staff are also available to help.

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- Scan the front of the store for an indoor coffee shop or food eatery where you may sit if you need a rest break. Some stores have benches near the front doors.
- Many stores have motorized carts. Contact the service desk or checkout clerk for assistance. Do not use a motorized cart if it is not appropriate or safe for you to use. (If you have restricted vision, hand-eye coordination difficulties, or have had a brain injury, you may be at risk of harming yourself or others while using a motorized cart.)

The Shopping Task

- Many shoppers prefer to shop from the outside aisles of the store first – where bread, eggs, meat, fruit, and vegetables are often found – and then to go up and down inside aisles only when other items are needed.
- Check your list often so you will not have to backtrack.
- Skip aisles that you do not need to access.
- Ask the shopping clerk to double-bag your groceries.
- Ask the clerk to take your bags to your car, cab, or bus.

Alternative Shopping Suggestions

- Many neighborhood grocery stores and co-ops provide home delivery service within a day or two of a customer call-in. Some stores charge a flat fee, while other stores require a minimum order.
- Some store managers are willing to assist customers with special needs. If you drive to the store, but feel that shopping might be too hard, ask the store manager if an employee could collect a few essential items and bring them to your car at a designated time.
- Connect with your local grocer ahead of time to request motorized shopping cart delivery to your car in the parking lot.
- Look into online grocery companies with home delivery service. Often, there is a service fee for delivery.
- Look into Meals on Wheels programs in your area and find out if you are eligible for this type of service. You can find information at www.mowaa.org on the Meals on Wheels website.

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