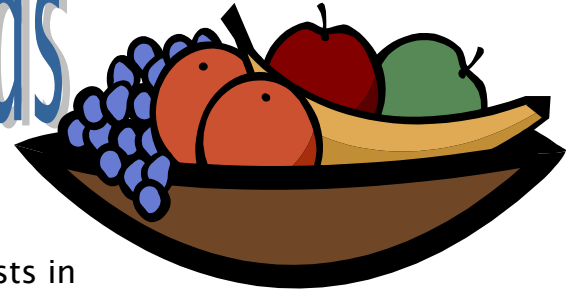


# Whole vs. Processed Foods



## WHY CHOOSE WHOLE FOODS?

Whole foods are considered to be any food that exists in its natural form or as close to it as possible. The more you process food, the less nutrition remains. The amount of calories can increase, and nutrients decrease. Whole foods contain essential vitamins and minerals that are needed to insure a healthy immune system and a greater quality of life.

**Fruits and Vegetables:** Fresh is best. Your next best choice is frozen. Canned is your third choice. The canning process usually involves the addition of salts or sugars. Juices are always best when they are 100%, “not from concentrate”.

**Whole Grains:** There are a variety of grains available. Make sure the ingredient label lists the word “whole”. Otherwise, important parts of the grain have been removed. Whole grain foods contain essential antioxidants, minerals, and fiber. Eating more whole grain foods is crucial to health. Studies have linked consumption of whole grains with longer life.

**Proteins:** Legumes (beans), fish, seafood, and soy are some of your best choices. Any meat or poultry should be low in saturated fat. Remove all visible fat and skin to reduce saturated fat content.

*Many local grocery stores are carrying more of a variety of Whole foods, however, be aware of the term “Healthy”. Not all products with this description are healthy. Learn to read labels carefully.*

## WHY LIMIT PROCESSED OR REFINED FOODS?

The more a food is processed, the fewer nutrients remain. In some cases, additives or preservatives are added and can act as toxins in the body. Additional fat, sugar, and sodium may be added as well. The amount of calories in the product often increases, and nutrient content decreases.

**Examples of Processed or Refined Foods:** Frozen Meals, Prepackaged Meals, Fried Foods, Cakes, Cookies, Canned Biscuits, Chips, Breakfast Bars or Toaster Treats, White Flour, White Bread, White Rice, White Pasta, Sodas, Juice with Sugar, Margarine, Mayonnaise, Foods Containing Hydrogenated Oils.

***Many people advocate avoiding processed foods completely due to the toxic nature of additives or the reduced nutritional value. If you do use processed or refined products, use them sparingly and include a variety of Whole Foods in your diet. Get in the habit of only eating things that nourish your body.***

For more information contact Foodlink's Nutritionist (585) 328-3380 x125