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A Conscious Guide to Purging Your Pantry

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“Laughter is brightest where food is best.” ~ Irish Proverb

Keeping the right ingredients on hand is essential so that you can make a quick, healthy and great tasting meal even on your busiest day. Having herbs, spices and condiments in your home that make your food taste the way you like it along with some basic food items, will allow you to make a quick, healthy meal that you enjoy on the days that you don't have time to get to the store for ingredients. I have a pantry basics list that I will share with you at a later date. It contains items that I always keep in my house and replace before I run out of them.

Having ingredients on hand is one reason to stock your pantry but taking time to go through your pantry and stock it actually serves a two-fold purpose.

1. Getting rid of any ingredients that may not support your health or “the pantry purge”. To make healthy meals you need to know that you are starting with the highest quality, wholesome ingredients. Many people’s pantries, refrigerators and freezers are unknowing filled with artificial colors, flavors, unwanted sweeteners, GMOs and a host of ingredients that are negatively impacting their health.
2. Keeping items in your home that allow you to make great tasting, quick meals. Keeping the right condiments, herbs, spices and basic ingredients in your home all the time will make it possible for you to make great meals even on your busiest days.

Let’s focus on purpose 1 above.

In today’s world, it’s gotten to a place where it is often necessary to do a “pantry purge” before we re-stock. Often, when I work with clients, one of the first things that we do together is go through their pantry, refrigerator and freezer. Little frustrates me more than when someone is trying really hard to make healthy food choices for themselves and their family and they have been misled into buying products that are completely artificial or contain a number of artificial ingredients.

When deciding what to replace I don't focus on the carbs, fat count or calories. I use this rule of thumb ingredients should be as close to the way nature created them as possible and have nourished generations of people.

Here are some the most common places where you'll find you can begin to consider replacing items:

1. Bottled salad dressings: This can easily be substituted for the highest quality ingredients to make your own which can even be made in advance and kept in your refrigerator.
2. Pancake syrup: Real maple syrup is the sap from a tree. It's a delicious natural product that contains vitamins and minerals. Don't be seduced by reduced calorie versions or imitation products.
3. Frozen vegetables: Check out the ingredients, many contain sauces that are full of additives that won't support your health and to make matters worse, people then microwave them in a plastic bag. It's super easy to roast or sauté or grill fresh vegetables or if you want to keep frozen on hand, pay attention to everything that is in the package.
4. Pre-packaged side dishes: A common place to find things like artificial colors and flavors, MSG and other additives.
5. Seasoning packages: Another place to find things like artificial colors and flavors, MSG and other additives. Something like taco seasoning can easily be home-made with a little cumin, garlic powder, chili powder and sea salt.

It's very easy to upgrade your pantry so that when you begin to cook, you know that you have a healthy foundation. To learn more visit www.TheConsciousPlate.com