In Motion

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website: http://www.nasoceana.navy.mil

Photos by PH3 Jennifer Simonds

Isabella Marie Gaudio helps her mom, Valerie Gaudio, choose the best bell pepper at the Oceana Commissary. Bell peppers are a great source of vitamin C. If you thought citrus fruits packed a powerful punch when it comes to being a good source of vitamin C, peppers have them beat. Green peppers have twice the amount of vitamin C by weight than citrus fruits and may even be effective in preventing certain cancers.

Billy Tatum, the butcher at NAS Oceana Commissary, demonstrates the difference between lean and high fat cuts of meat. "We can assist patrons in selecting a leaner cut of meat and provide tasty cooking tips for meat preparation," said Tatum. Beef round, flank and sirloin steak are lower in fat and calories than rib-eye, T-bone, porterhouse steak or ribs.

Commissary virtual tour: Learn how to 'Ace the Aisles'

by Diana Settles and Lynn Kistler

When you head down the aisle at the commissary where there are more than 50 similarly packaged drink cartons facing you, do you know how to choose the healthiest? When you walk down the "cereal" section, is it easy for you to choose the brand of cereal richest in fiber, vitamins and minerals, and lowest in sugar? There are so many choices.

The commissary at Oceana opened its doors to the Navy Medicine's health promotion team to show many of the healthy foods and drinks available to Sailors, Marines and their families who shop at the commissary.

Learn how to make the best choices as you walk the aisles of the commissary. Here are a few simple tips to help you ace the aisles:

Produce – Fruits and Vegetables

This is the healthiest section of the store. Remember to eat five to nine servings of fruits and vegetables a day. Since fresh produce doesn't last very long, buy only the amount you'll eat over a few days. And, remember, frozen fruits are a great, longer lasting option. Fresh and frozen produce is more nutritional than canned produce.

Meat, Fish, Chicken, Turkey, Eggs: Get Your Protein!

These foods are sources of high-quality protein. And don't forget the eggs. Be aware of high fat processed meats. For example, most hotdogs are approximately 80-90 percent fat. Focus on leaner meats such as fish and poultry rather than high fat content meats such as beef ribs or rib-eye.

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Commissary

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Milk, Cheese, Yogurt: Call the dairy case 'Calcium Central.'

If you don't stop here, your diet may be low in calcium. Including low-fat milk, yogurt and cheese in your diet is an easy way to get your recommended intake. Leaner dietary selections include 1 percent or less milkfat products.

Frozen Foods

The frozen foods aisle is a great place for quick, convenient, nutritious food choices for any meal occasion – breakfast, lunch, dinner and even dessert. Use nutrition labels to compare frozen prepared meals and entrees. You'll find that the calorie, fat, cholesterol and sodium of different brands can vary quite a bit. Read the labels and choose wisely. Compare food labels and choose the lowest fat and sodium product. Frozen fruits and vegetables are excellent frozen food selections – produce items are frozen at the peak of their growth and include the same amount of vitamins and minerals as fresh produce.

Bread, Cereal, Pasta, Rice

Your choices within this food group can make the difference between a high fiber diet and a low-fiber diet. Select 100 percent whole-wheat products whenever possible – such as whole grain breads, cereals, pasta and brown rice – to boost your fiber intake. Be cautious of high sugar cereals. A general guideline is to avoid cereals that have sugar listed as one of the top three ingredients.

Drinks

If your family is drinking a lot of soda, you may consider replacing soda drinks with water or 100 percent fruit juice. Read the drink container. If the front of the container includes the wording 100 percent fruit juice, then it contains fruit juice as the main ingredient. If the front of the container has the wording "drink," then watch out. Sugar is most likely the main ingredient, and the drink is not a healthy choice. Though many of the drinks taste the same, some include sugar (high fructose corn syrup) and water as the main ingredient while others contain 100 percent fruit juice – a much healthier choice.

Beans, Nuts

There are a wide variety of beans and peas, both dry and canned, available in the supermarket. Pinto, kidney or black beans provide fiber, folate – an important vitamin especially during pregnancy – and protein. Nuts and peanut butter are also healthy food options.

Snacks

Rather than doughnuts or other high fat, high sugar and preservative snacks, select more nutrient dense options such as fresh or dried fruits and vegetables, salsa with low fat chips, and whole grain foods.

The staff at the Oceana Commissary strive to provide healthy and affordable food selections to patrons.

"The healthy food selections at the commissary are competitive with any local grocery stores in the Hampton Roads area, and the prices are lower," said Hazel Ennis, Commissary Store Director. "We strive to offer a well balanced selection of food that meets the needs of all of our customers."

Diana Settles and Lynn Kistler are with Navy Environmental Health Center.

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Lt. Cmdr. Liam Montgomery of VF-101 picks up some skim milk. Before shopping, Montgomery and his wife Tracy make a list of the items they need. "This helps us make healthier selections when we are grocery shopping. We also try to focus on selecting non-processed food items," he said.

Wally and Lorri Braa read food labels to determine the healthiest cereal choice. "To keep our cholesterol levels down, we really try to focus on making healthy choices. We look at fat grams in foods, and we concentrate on eating high fiber foods and a lot of fruits and vegetables. At home, we watch our portion sizes," she said.

Free Oceana Commissary Tours are available

Registered dieticians conduct educational tours for ID cardholders with commissary privileges. The commissary tour provides a good understanding of how to purchase food that meets nutritional guidelines for health and wellness. For example, participants learn how to read the food label, view different meat cuts, and learn how to shop more economically by using price per unit information. Knowing how to shop and what to look for in each aisle of the commissary helps guarantee a cart stocked with healthful products. Selecting healthy foods includes making a list of food items ahead of time. Always remember the golden rule for commissary shopping: it's unwise to shop on an empty stomach because you're more likely to buy junk food when you're hungry.

To register for a tour, contact the Navy Environmental Health Center Nutrition Program Manager at 953-0971.