

# **SAVING AT THE SUPERMARKET**

The New York City  
Department of Consumer Affairs

*Plan  
ahead*

**This list of guidelines can help you plan ahead for grocery shopping.** Smart shopping and consumer protection will save you money and headaches.

**Shopping List** - Plan your supermarket purchases. Make a shopping list and stick to it. Avoid impulse purchases.

**Advertised Specials** - Check newspaper ads and store circulars for advertised specials before you shop.

**Store Coupons** - Items available with a store coupon are usually the "hottest" bargains in the store. The coupon limits the quantity of the item you can buy.

**Manufacturer Coupons** - "Cents off" coupons for specific name-brand products must be cut and presented to the cashier. Look in Sunday's newspaper!

**Buy Only the Quantities You Need** - Do not overstock perishables. Buy only what you actually need to feed your family.

**Unit Priced per Measure** - Use the shelf-mounted **unit-price** label (price/ounce, pound or pint) to compare the cost of different brands and package sizes for similar items on the shelf.

**In-Store Specials** - Many supermarkets offer in-store reduced price specials. Look for a shelf sign or different color "unit price" tag.

**Store Brand or Private-Label Products** - Store brands are comparable to name brands in terms of quality, ingredients or taste, but cost less.

**Scanners** - Scanners provide a detailed receipt for the items you buy. Check the receipt against your purchases.

*Save  
at the  
store*

*Laws that  
regulate  
markets*

**Manufacturer Rebates** - Use mail-in certificates to get money back for buying a product. To get your rebate, follow the instructions on the refund certificate.

**Rain Checks** - If a sale item is out of stock, request a rain check so you can buy the item at the sale price later. Rain check policies should be posted.

**Advertised Items** - Ads must truthfully describe the name, variety and size of the item on sale and list any purchase restrictions. Stores must make reasonable quantities available.

**Scales** - Markets must have a scale within 30 feet of their prepackaged food section. Check for short weight and the tare weight deduction — the deduction taken for the weight of the empty container from the gross weight. The scale must have a DCA seal on it, start at zero, and come to rest before weight or price is quoted.

**Unit Pricing** - The unit price — the cost per measure (pound, pint, etc.) — must be listed on the shelf below most products.

**Item Pricing** - All market commodities sold or offered for sale in New York City must have a stamp, tag or label giving the item's cost, **except:**

- milk
- eggs
- fresh produce
- some frozen foods
- baby food in jars
- vending machine products
- snack foods
- food sold for on-premise consumption
- tobacco

*How to  
solve a  
problem  
with the  
store*

- bulk-food sales
- display items at the end of the aisle
- items on sale for seven days or less

Stores with less than \$2 million in annual sales are also exempt unless part of a network or chain.

**“Open” or “Freshness” Dates** - These dates show the last recommended sale or use date, and must be marked on perishable food product packages, such as egg cartons, dairy products and baked goods.

**Packaged Products** - The product's identity, net weight, measure or numerical count, and the name and address of the distributor must appear on its label.

1. Go to the customer service booth or courtesy counter and ask for assistance.
2. If you need further assistance, ask to speak to the Store Manager.
3. If not resolved at the store, call store headquarters.
4. If the problem is still not resolved, contact DCA.



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Consumer Affairs**

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For information, call **311**.

**[www.nyc.gov/consumers](http://www.nyc.gov/consumers)**

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