

DOs and DON'Ts from a food economist

By LORAIN McCLISH

Questions about shopping, food preparation, meal planning and nutrition were fielded by Jennifer Baker from grocery shoppers who visited Wrigley Supermarket on Orchard Lake, just north of Thirteen Mile Road Friday.

It was "Nutrition Week" at Wrigleys. Mrs. Baker, a resident of Farmington and a food economics student at Mercy College, was one of 74 volunteers to take a post at each store in the metropolitan area.

The goal of the program, evolved by Allied Supermarkets, was to get reliable nutrition information to thousands of people in a single day. The sponsor had a good agent in Mrs. Baker.

The only time she was stopped, and she laughed about this, was when a shopper told her, "I have one diabetic in my family, and one child with an allergy. I'll bet I know more about this than you do."

Her comment to this was "She probably does."

MRS. BAKER set up her own idea of a shopping basket for four for a week in a display, and when shoppers didn't approach her, she approached them.

The only notable thing that was lacking in her display was desserts and her answer to this was that "desserts are not a nutritional requirement. If you must have them, keep them in the fruit line."

Once, however, on the subject of cakes, she volunteered that using a pre-mix was less expensive than preparing one from scratch.

Otherwise, on the subject of prepared foods, her answer had to do with priorities. "What is more important to you, time or money?" she asked. Whatever the answer, the consumer was the judge.

Mrs. Baker passed out literature from the U. S. Department of Agriculture for economy-minded families, daily food guides, dispensed information on the basic four, and offered youngsters coloring books. But taking children with you on your weekly shopping tour is a no-no.

All the planning you can do for a week's menu can go up in smoke if a youngster gets his way with what goes into the food cart, Mrs. Baker said.

SHE STRESSED planning for a week in advance on several occasions, and another suggestion she had to offer was "don't go shopping when you are hungry. You'll buy a lot more than you need."

A common error among the cooks of the world is to prepare more than you need. "Small amounts of leftovers are very seldom eaten — more often thrown out," she said.

Hamburger was on Mrs. Baker's display table, and many shoppers, she said, were confused as to labels which read "24 per cent fat" or "28 per cent fat" or whatever it read, and what did it mean? And did it really matter?

"If you are going to buy hamburger at all," she said, "buy it in a store in an affluent area. All it is is beef trim and when you buy it from a store located where there is a large consumption of higher priced beef, such as here, you are going to get a better grade hamburger."

Another question on the subject of hamburger came from a live-aloner.

"I buy hamburger in small amounts," said the bachelor, "but it comes out of the freezer like a rock and its hours before I can scrape enough off to make a meal."

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