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DEPARTMENT OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS ISSUES TIPS TO HELP YOU KNOW YOUR RIGHTS AT THE SUPERMARKET REGISTER

When doing their daily shopping at the supermarket, New Yorkers are protected by several local laws and rules relating to scales, advertising, pricing and product information. The Department of Consumer Affairs' (DCA) ongoing consumer tips can assist people with buying the right goods, saving money and making the most of the time spent in the market.

“Shopping for food to feed your family is one of the most basic yet significant things a consumer does,” said DCA Commissioner Julie Menin. “And when you are in the market, the Department of Consumer Affairs is shopping with you to make sure that what you are buying is safe, properly marked and that you’re charged the right price. We want to help you make your next trip to the market easier, safer and less expensive.”

Check your receipt. Most supermarkets use scanners to ring products up at the register, but just because there is a computerized system, doesn't mean it's always accurate. Always review your receipt to make sure you were charged the advertised price, for the correct number of items, and that you weren't charged tax on non-taxable goods such as medicines and many foods. Visit the [NYS Department of Taxation](http://www.tax.ny.gov/pubs_and_bulls/tg_bulletins/st/quick_reference_guide_for_taxable_and_exempt_property_and_services.htm) (link to:

http://www.tax.ny.gov/pubs_and_bulls/tg_bulletins/st/quick_reference_guide_for_taxable_and_exempt_property_and_services.htm) for a list of what items can't be taxed.

Hold the store to its advertising. To put it simply, ads must be truthful. If you see an ad, then the store must have the brand, variety and size of the item as advertised and any purchase restrictions must be stated in the advertising and not added on later in-store. Stores must honor their advertised prices and have reasonable quantities of the advertised goods available. If an item is out of stock, ask for a rain check so you can buy it later at the sale price.

Check the scales. Each scale in the store must have an up-to-date DCA sticker on it, certifying that it has been inspected and judged to be in working order. Scales must

start at zero and come to rest before you are quoted a weight and or a price. Make sure the store doesn't overcharge you and deducts the weight of the empty packaging.

Weigh your packaged goods. Supermarkets sell a lot of store-packed foods, like nuts, or fruits in packaging, or pre-packaged meats and those goods must have a label on them with product identity, net weight, and name and address of distributor. The market must also provide a scale within 30 feet of the section where those goods are sold, or a sign directing you to the nearest scale. That way you can check that you are being charged an accurate price for the weight of the item you are buying.

Look for prices. The item price must be on an individual label, stamp or tag on the item itself. There are some exceptions to this rule, including tobacco, bulk food, eggs, fresh produce, milk and items on sale for seven days or fewer. The unit price – meaning the cost per pound, pint or other unit of measure – must be listed on the shelf near most products.

Make sure it's fresh. Perishable food items, such as egg cartons, dairy products and baked goods, are required to have a last recommended sale or use date on them

Make a shopping list, check for sales and coupons, and comparison shop. You can save time and money if you know what you need and shop for the best price. Having a list will make you less likely to be tempted while you're shopping and help you stick to your budget. There are a lot of coupons available online and by using smartphone apps and you might even be able to find some items online for less and save yourself a trip.

For more consumer tips, visit [nyc.gov/consumers](http://www.nyc.gov/consumers) (link to: <http://www.nyc.gov/consumers>) and join the conversation on Twitter by following [@NYCDCA](https://twitter.com/NYCDCA) (link to: <http://www.twitter.com/nycdca>) and using the hashtag [#ConsumerMatters](https://twitter.com/search?q=%23consumermatters&src=typd) (link to: <https://twitter.com/search?q=%23consumermatters&src=typd>)