

Managing Nutrition During COVID-19

In uncertain times, you may have many questions about how to manage your health and nutrition. The Eat Well for Heart Health (chapter 5) in the *Taking Charge of your Heart Health* manual contains a lot of information on how to follow a heart healthy diet. However, given the current situation, we understand that you may face more challenges to eating heart healthy including financial instability, decreased ability to access the grocery stores and limitations on foods available.

During times like these it is important to remember that nutrition is just one aspect of health. Taking care of yourself in other ways, such as managing stress, may be of higher importance right now and that's okay.

STOCKING UP YOUR FOOD SUPPLY

To increase social distance, it is advised to stock up your household with groceries to limit the number of trips to the grocery stores. Keep in mind that we encourage stocking up, **not stockpiling**.

Aim for a **two-week supply**. Think about foods that keep for a longer time so that you can limit trips to the store. Refer to the table below for heart-healthy staples to have on hand.

Stocking up means ensuring a two-week supply of items.

Stockpiling means buying beyond what is needed can leave less supplies for those who cannot afford to stock up in larger quantities.

Vegetables and Fruits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Frozen and canned, aim for options without added sugar and reduced or no-added salt.• Long-lasting fresh produce such as apples, oranges, melon, cabbage, onion, beets, turnips, winter squash
Grains and Starches 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Brown rice, quinoa, barley, oats• Potatoes and sweet potatoes• Whole wheat pasta• Whole-grain bread, tortillas, naan, pita• Whole-grain crackers (with hummus for a healthy snack)• High-fibre whole grain cereal
Proteins 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Canned or dried beans, lentils and chickpeas (roast chickpeas for a healthy snack)• Canned fish or frozen, unbattered fish and seafood• Nuts and seeds or nut butters• Poultry, lean red meat (lean ground beef, sirloin and round cuts of beef and pork)• Shelf-stable milk or milk alternatives• Low-fat cheese and yogurt (reduced or no-added sugar)• Tofu and tempeh
Healthy fats 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Frozen avocado• Liquid plant oils (olive oil, canola oil, avocado oil, etc.)• Olives

COOKING WITH FREEZER AND PANTRY STAPLES

Making meals using freezer and pantry staples that you have on hand can be simple and heart healthy. Try some of these meal suggestions.

Loaded baked sweet potato	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Microwave a sweet potato and top with black beans, thawed frozen avocado, salsa and plain Greek yogurt mixed with reduced-salt taco seasoning.• Serve with frozen vegetables on the side.
Chicken stir-fry	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sauté diced chicken with diced onions, garlic, ginger in canola oil.• Add in frozen stir-fry vegetables and add small amount low-sodium soy sauce and low-salt vegetable or chicken broth.• Add lid to pan and cook until vegetables soft.• Add stir-fried meat and vegetables to cooked brown rice.
Lentil Bolognese	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sauté diced onion, garlic and shredded carrots.• Add in red lentils and marinara sauce, simmer until lentils soft.• Season to taste (dried basil and oregano are great additions).• Add sauce to whole grain pasta.
Tuna Pita Pockets	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mix canned tuna with mayonnaise or plain Greek yogurt. Add in drained canned diced tomatoes and diced onion and stir to mix.• Fill halved whole-grain pitas with mixture and sprinkle low-fat cheddar or mozzarella cheese.• Put on baking sheet and bake at 400 degrees for 8-10 minutes or until warmed.• Serve with side of canned or frozen mixed vegetables.

A NOTE ABOUT VITAMINS AND SUPPLEMENTS

Many people are wondering if they should be taking additional vitamins, minerals or supplements to boost their immunity and protect themselves against COVID-19. There is no evidence to suggest that taking additional vitamins, minerals or supplements will increase your immunity or provide protection against COVID-19. Additionally, there can be harm in taking high-dose supplements as they may interact with medications. Before adding any vitamin or supplement to your routine, we recommend checking with your doctor, pharmacist, or calling the Poison and Drug Information line (1-800-332-1414).

The best way to support your immune system is to eat a balanced diet, add movement into your day, get enough sleep, and manage your stress levels.