

Top Tips for Healthy Eating During the COVID-19 Pandemic

1. Plan ahead.

- ✓ Think about your meals and snacks in advance to avoid multiple trips to the grocery store. Try using a [Weekly Menu Planner](#). These plans can be kept for future use. For helpful meal planning tips, see Meal Planning [on the PCN website](#).
- ✓ Create balanced meals: 1/2 plate vegetables and fruit, 1/4 plate protein, 1/4 plate whole grains.
- ✓ Balanced snacks including fibre and protein, such as apple and peanut butter or whole grain crackers and cheese, can help keep you fueled between meals.
- ✓ Stay hydrated. Consider keeping a water bottle at your workstation.



2. Stick to a schedule

- ✓ Aim to have three meals per day, every four to six hours.
- ✓ For those who don't regularly work from home, it may be beneficial to prepare your meals and snacks as though you are going to work for the day. Plan similar timing for meals as you would at the office.
- ✓ Eat your meal away from your work area. It can help you recharge both physically and mentally.

3. Shop on a budget

- ✓ To reduce your grocery bill, consider frozen foods such as fish, meat, vegetables, and fruit; canned foods such as beans, lentils, and tuna; and bulk whole grains such as oats, brown rice, whole grain pasta, and barley. To learn more, see Shopping on a Budget [on the PCN website](#).

4. Consider healthy substitutes

- ✓ Be mindful that during this time, certain ingredients at the grocery store might be out of stock. Consider simple substitutes as a backup plan like chickpeas instead of chicken in your stir fry. Use Canada's Food Guide to find alternative ideas for each section of the plate.

5. Make your food last

- ✓ Leftovers can be a great way to reduce food waste. Consider including leftovers as part of your meal plan. Keep leftovers in the fridge for up to three days - reheat thoroughly before eating. For more information, see the Top Tips for Making Food Last Longer [on the PCN website](#).

6. Be Mindful.

- ✓ During times of uncertainty, we may be feeling new or unfamiliar negative emotions. If you notice you are reaching for food to comfort yourself, consider other forms of self-care such as calling a friend, listening to music, yoga, or [calm breathing](#). If you are new to self-care, consider a small task each day using the [30 Days of Self-Care](#) calendar. You can also talk to your healthcare provider about the mental health resources available to you through your Primary Care Network.

COVID-19 Common Question Myth Busting

Should I take any vitamins, minerals and supplements to avoid COVID-19?

To date, there is no evidence to suggest that any vitamin, mineral, supplement or diet will decrease or mitigate your risk of contracting COVID-19.¹ The current evidence suggests the best way to prevent the spread of COVID-19 is to practice physical distancing and proper hygiene practices. For more information visit [Alberta Health Services](#).

Can I get COVID-19 through the food I'm eating?

There is currently no evidence that food is a likely source or route of transmission of COVID-19 and there are currently no reported cases of COVID-19 transmission through food. People are unlikely to be infected with the virus through food. The Canadian Food Inspection Agency has strong measures in place to ensure the safety of Canada's food supply.²

The World Health Organization continues to recommend all Canadians follow good hygiene practices during food handling and preparation, such as washing hands, cooking meat thoroughly and avoiding potential cross-contamination between cooked and uncooked foods.²

Do I need to sanitize all of my groceries?

Coronaviruses are killed by common cleaning and disinfection methods and by cooking food to safe internal temperatures. The Government of Canada recommends you wash your fresh fruit and vegetables with potable water before use. Use a vegetable brush on produce that have a firm skin (examples: carrots and melons). Do not use soap to wash your produce. Wash your produce under running water instead of soaking it in the sink. Bacteria in the sink could be transferred to your food.³

Although the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) does not recommend washing grocery packaging, they do recommend routine cleaning of frequently touched surfaces with soap and water. High touch surfaces include tables, countertops, faucets, sinks, etc. They also recommend washing your hands before and after handling food for 20 seconds with soap and water.⁴

References:

1. <https://www.nccih.nih.gov/health/in-the-news-coronavirus-and-alternative-treatments>
2. <https://www.inspection.gc.ca/covid-19/questions-and-answers/eng/1584648921808/1584648922156>
3. <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/general-food-safety-tips/food-safety-you.html#a2>
4. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/disinfecting-your-home.html>