



Navy MWR at Home Food and Nutrition Tips



COVID-19 and Nutrition – Care for Yourself, Others

Before you break out the “quarantinis” and start stress baking, take a moment to consider the foods you should be stocking up on and why (while hopefully being kind to other shoppers in the process). If items aren’t available, don’t panic. The store shelves will be restocked. We’ll start with the “why” first. Your immune system is directly affected by the foods you eat. A diet made up of processed junk with little to no nutrients doesn’t leave your immune system much to work with when it needs to ramp up its defenses and fight off viruses, bacteria or other invaders.

Do you think that taking a vitamin C supplement or another “immune enhancing” pill/powder will work? It may help a bit, but when it comes to nutrient intake, the body seems to be able to do more with nutrients coming from food versus those coming from supplements. We can’t replicate into pills or powders what nature produces.

Supplements won’t cut it, and traditionally healthy foods (think fresh) have a short shelf life - they won’t last a whole two weeks. So, what should you buy instead? We hope that this newsletter will give you some healthy food and nutrition ideas, along with some realistic considerations, especially if you have children to care for at home and now find yourself in a new role as homeschool instructor.

No knack for cooking? Fear not. These recipes aren’t expert level, nor are they set in stone. Just think of them as guidelines, not hard rules. If you need to do some baking to release stress, just make sure you’re not baking enough for the entire neighborhood and that you’re still finding time to exercise and stay fit.

Other Factors to Consider

Keep in mind during this situation that your activity level may be lower than your usual routine. If that’s the case, watch your overall calorie intake. As our normal schedules get disrupted, we have a tendency to eat out of boredom (or not eat regularly, then binge) if we don’t have a routine.

If you’ve been inside for days on end during the COVID-19 pandemic, try to schedule activities throughout the day to stay active and keep from going a little stir-crazy (a brief search of the internet resulted in plenty of ideas).

Stay hydrated! Dehydration is often mistaken as hunger (as is being tired or bored). If you need something other than water to drink, try adding a small amount of flavor enhancers to mix things up. Or, make a batch of iced tea/iced coffee to sip.

Keep some electrolyte solutions on hand (e.g., sports drinks or other oral rehydration beverages) in the event you do feel ill to avoid dehydration.

Disclaimer:

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Food Ideas

This list includes both common food staples and other ideas that may not be as mainstream, which may be options if some food items aren't available.

- Pantry staples are in red.

- Fridge/freezer items are in blue.

- Some whole/uncut fruits/veggies (*) are fine at room temperature for a while.

Produce

While fresh items traditionally have a better nutrient profile, they won't keep for two weeks. Incorporate frozen and canned items to stretch your items on hand. Also, the produce you are used to purchasing may not be available. Look at this as an opportunity to try new fruits and vegetables!

V8 Vegetable Juice
Dried fruits
Freeze-dried fruit
Bananas*
Apples*
Oranges/citrus fruit*
Potatoes*
Garlic
Onion
Ginger root
Rutabaga
Turnip
Jicama*
Parsnips
Collard greens/ Swiss chard
Cabbage

Canned vegetables

Asparagus
Spinach
Green beans
Beets
Artichokes

Canned fruits in 100% juice

Pineapple
Mandarin oranges
Peaches

Dairy/Eggs

Dry milk
Powdered eggs
Shelf-stable alternative milk
(rice, almond, etc.)
Evaporated milk

Meat

Beef jerky
Canned meats:
Salmon
Tuna
Crab
Clams
Oysters
Smoked salmon/trout

Frozen meats

Fish
Mussels
Scallops
Shrimp
Precooked beef/chicken

Grains/Starches

Go beyond rice! Many grains cook similarly; they just need additional liquid and/or cooking times.

Amaranth
Millet
Spelt
Quinoa
Sorghum
Couscous
Bulgur
Wild rice
Pasta (whole wheat if available)
Oats
Grits
Cornmeal / polenta
Corn (canned / frozen)
Beans (canned/dry)
Lentils (canned/dry)

Condiments/Flavorings

Vinegar
Ketchup
Mustard (Dijon and yellow)
BBQ sauce
Soy sauce (low sodium)
Broth/stock/bouillon
Herbs/spices
Hot sauce
Marinades/ready-made sauces

Fats

Peanut butter
Nuts
Seeds
Olives (can/pouch)
Hummus
Avocados
Olive oil

TIPS

If you don't see something at the store that you need, try seeing if it's in a display area or in a "bulk" section if your store has one. No luck? Don't stress; it will likely be back in stock in a week or so.

Try thinking of substitutions to broaden your options. Absolutely need milk but can't find any? Reconstitute from dry milk or evaporated milk. It will taste a bit different, but it works in emergencies.

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Food and Recipe Ideas

This is not a complete list but may help give you some ideas.

General Ideas

- Breakfast/brunch for dinner – have some eggs with veggies or a crustless quiche, ham/lean deli meat, french toast (eggs and bread), and fruit
- Tortilla or pita bread pizzas, quesadillas or calzones – mix and match proteins (ham, deli turkey/chicken), veggies and sauces (olive oil and garlic, tomato, pesto, lite cheese) for variety
- Soup/stew – so many varieties can be created!
- Meat/protein + a non-starchy vegetable (canned/frozen) + starch (potato, grains, beans, etc.)
- Slow cooker options – shredded pork/chicken/beef w/ taco seasoning or BBQ sauce

Recipes

Recipe ideas with minimal equipment:

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1VEVudcHLh79QcpN0ncLYH4zLv09dErM0>

Websites can take ingredients you have on hand and search for recipes that call for them. These don't necessarily incorporate nutrition as a factor but can help you make a meal when you need to.

<https://www.escoffieronline.com/top-apps-for-finding-recipes-for-ingredients-you-already-have/> ← list of apps/websites for recipe generating

<https://myfridgefood.com/>

<https://www.commissaries.com/recipes/all-recipes> allows browsing for dishes, main ingredients and categories

Snack Ideas

- Veggies & dressing/hummus
- Celery/apple/banana & peanut butter
- DIY trail mix (dried fruit, nuts, granola)
- Protein bars
- Frozen peas (actually pretty tasty)
- Frozen fruit drizzled with chocolate syrup

TIPS

Have ingredients on hand but no ideas? Use the links at the bottom of the page or visit www.commissaries.com for meal suggestions using the ingredients you have on hand.

Try to incorporate as many non-starchy veggies and fiber as possible — this can help reduce hunger and prevent overeating during times of low activity.

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Resources and Recipe Websites

Defense Commissary Agency:

<https://www.commissaries.com/recipes/all-recipes>

Cooking Different Types of Grains:

<https://wholegrainscouncil.org/recipes/cooking-whole-grains>

Using Canned Meats Instead of Fresh/Frozen:

<https://www.myrecipes.com/quick-and-easy/cook-with-canned-meat>

Seasoning Food:

<https://www.cooksmarts.com/goals/learn-to-cook/> ("Maximize Flavor" and "Ingredient Guides" in particular)

General Information & More Recipes:

<https://www.americastestkitchen.com/articles/2240-resources-you-can-count-on-to-cook-well-and-be-well>
(*can sign up for a free 14-day trial to access content)

<https://www.news-press.com/story/life/food/2020/03/17/coronavirus-quarantine-recipes-its-time-we-get-back-kitchen/5031270002/>

Don't Eat All Your Snacks in One Day:

<https://www.myrecipes.com/news/coronavirus-quarantine-snack-tips>

Pantry Ideas:

<https://goodcheapeats.com/preparing-for-a-pantry-challenge/>

<https://www.news-press.com/story/life/food/2020/03/17/coronavirus-quarantine-recipes-its-time-we-get-back-kitchen/5031270002/>

<https://spoonuniversity.com/lifestyle/typical-pantry-items-meals-you-can-make>
(not all are "healthy," but has good ideas for combinations)

Additional Resources and Recipe Sites

Sources:

<https://entertainingwithbeth.com/25-recipes-for-a-self-quarantine>

<https://www.allrecipes.com/article/how-to-stock-emergency-pantry/>

<https://www.bostonmagazine.com/health/2020/03/17/nine-pantry-friendly-recipes/>

<https://www.coupons.com/thegoodstuff/8-pantry-recipes-from-ingredients/>

<https://www.foodnetwork.com/recipes/photos/cooking-from-the-pantry>

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