

**References:**

<https://www.unicef.org/coronavirus/easy-affordable-and-healthy-eating-tips-during-coronavirus-disease-covid-19-outbreak>



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# Dietary Tips during COVID-19 Pandemic

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**COVID-19 Pandemic has turned family life on its head. By applying social distancing and lockdown of schools, establishments, workplaces and public places, many families are staying home eating their meals most of the day. Here are some dietary tips to improve health and immunity:**

- **Eat fresh fruits and vegies:**

It may be difficult to buy vegies and fruits during home quarantine. However, it is important to keep eating them as part of the daily dietary routine. If it is difficult to buy fresh fruits and vegies, it is advisable to freeze them to preserve flavor and nutrients.

- **If fresh products are unavailable, replace them with canned and dried products:**

Fresh products are always the first choice. However, if fresh products are unavailable, many healthy substitutes are easy to store and prepare. Canned beans and canned peas that contain the essential dietary elements can be incorporated in your meal plans. Canned oily fish like sardines, tuna and salmon which are rich in proteins, Omega 3 and many vitamins and minerals. Such products can be eaten cold in sandwiches, salads or pasta. They can be also cooked with some types of meals.

- **Maintain main meals and snacks:**

It is important to maintain the three healthy main meals and snacks especially for children. Instead of sweets,

candies and salty snacks, offer them healthy substitutes like nuts, milk, unsweetened yogurt, chopped or dried fruits, boiled eggs etc.

- **Limit processed foods:**

Avoid processed foods and drinks that are rich in fat, sugars and salt like frozen and fast-prepare foods.

- **Make cooking and food gatherings fun and a opportunity to strengthen family bonds:**

Cooking and dining with family members is an opportunity to strengthen family bonds. Therefore, it is recommended to set fixed times for meals, ask children to join in to prepare food like cleaning and sorting food items. Older children can be asked to do more complicated tasks like setting up the table.

- **Feeding infants:**

Breast-feeding is best for infants 6-24 months old. Mothers infected with COVID-19 virus can still breastfeed after consulting with their physician. However, they should adhere to respiratory precautions by wearing a facemask and wash hands before and after touching the baby in addition to cleaning surfaces routinely.

- **Tips for food hygiene during COVID-19 pandemic:**

There is no scientific evidence to prove that COVID-19

virus infection can be transmitted through food products. The virus can be transmitted by touching contaminated surfaces and then touching the face, mouth or eyes.

Direct mixing with infected people can also transmit it.

If that happens, **do the following:**

- Keep a distance of at least one meter between you and others when shopping or receiving deliveries.
- Wear a facemask before leaving the house and when in public places especially shopping malls.
- Wear gloves before touching the grocery cart, dispose of the gloves and wash hands afterwards.
- Use electronic payments and avoid cash.
- Dispose of grocery bags immediately, clean and sanitize all items and wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.

- **General instructions for food hygiene:**

- Wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- Allocate cutting boards for uncooked meats and fish and other cutting boards for other types of food like vegies.
- Cook foods at recommended temperature.
- Freeze foods that require freezing in order to preserve their nutrients.
- Pay attention to expiry dates.
- Dispose of leftovers to avoid piling up.
- Wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds before eating and teach children to do that.
- Keep households and utensils clean.