

Staying Healthy

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Nutrition and Meal Planning Grocery Shopping in the Store and Online Grocery Store websites for Online Shopping Disinfecting Groceries

No one knows how long the Coronavirus COVID-19 public health safety measures will be in place but this is a good time to focus on nutrition. Research has shown that when we eat healthy and walk, run and/or do other forms exercise plus stay well hydrated, we feel the positive difference in both mind and body – together with an increased resistance to disease.

A winning strategy for good health is to incorporate fresh whole foods. Whole foods are those foods that grow in a garden or farmer's field where nothing unhealthy has been added and none of the benefits have been removed. A recent large research study showed that those who ate a diet high in vegetables, fruits, legumes, fish, poultry and whole grains lived longer than those who had a diet of red meat, processed carbohydrates, refined grains, French fries and desserts.

As research has become more accurate in determining what foods will result in good health and protection from diseases, we also have become a more health conscious society. Some of the newer research emphasizes focusing on what foods are nutritious, avoiding certain foods and eating appropriate portions.

In 2019, EAT-Lancet, a consortium of international researchers recommended a "Great Food Transformation." The recommendations included decreasing animal foods by at least half, and doubling plant based foods (vegetables, fruit, legumes and nuts). The research firm Mintel found that the amount of plant-based foods sold in grocery stores grew 268% from 2012-2018.

There are a number of physicians who are attending "nutrition as medicine" conferences. I met an internist on a plane home from Washington, D.C. He gave me the name of some books since I, too, find nutrition fascinating. One of the books was written by Michael Greger, M.D. FACLM. Other physicians like Dean Ornish, M.D. and Andrew Weil, M.D., a Yale medical school graduate, talk about patients who have had diabetes 2 and heart disease that reversed with dietary changes.

These physicians and researchers believe the research shows the healthiest diet is one that reduces the intake of meat, eggs, dairy, processed foods and sugar. If giving up meat does not work for you, try to focus on healthier meats like chicken, salmon, shrimp, tuna and sardines. If going without beef is too hard - eat lean ground beef. A number of families have cut their meat

intake in half. Sometimes, these families incorporate such things as black bean burgers or other meat substitutes into their diet on days they are not eating meat.

The foods that research shows strengthen our bodies are plant based whole foods, i.e. fresh or frozen vegetables and fruits, legumes (black beans, chickpeas, lentils, split peas), whole grains, nuts and seeds, mushrooms, herbs and spices. In your efforts to make healthy changes, eat larger portions of above whole foods and smaller portions of meat, eggs, dairy, processed foods and desserts. Any healthy change, no matter how small, is a victory.

Meals and Meal Planning.

Make eating a meal a good experience. Try some new recipes. Try to keep the focus on eating your food and not reading a book or watching television or seeing what is on your smart phone. Be creative to make the food tasty and attractive. Try adding healthy spices and herbs. Use anti-viral garlic and onion when cooking your foods. Mealtime is an opportunity, especially during this Pandemic, to discuss questions and correct incorrect information related to the Pandemic. These discussions can decrease anxiety.

If you have a family, try to include the family in setting the table and/or making the meal. Sit down together. Make a time to pray together with gratitude for your day and being together. Mealtime is perfect time to hear about each family member's day and to show your love and kindness for each other. It is a time to also talk about any concerns or worries. Research has shown that eating together in this way can have healthy results for a couple's relationship and for a more solid foundation for children. Make it work for your family.

If you are alone at this time in your life, remember that eating in is an important form of self-care. Make each mealtime is special. Set the table so it looks nice. Consider lighting a candle and having soft music in the background. If it is nice outside, you might want to sit and eat outdoors and be in God's nature. Before beginning your meal say a simple heartfelt prayer of gratitude for the food on your table and the good parts of your day. For a moment "be still" "and quiet your soul. Mindfully eat your food knowing it is nourishing your body and mind.

GROCERY SHOPPING

This is the time to be thoughtful about meal planning related to nutrition and purchasing foods that stay fresh for at least a week. Make a list of what is needed – a list is a great planner for the next week's meals. It also helps prevent impulse buying. A list prevents forgetting a needed item – this is not a time when you want to go back to the grocery store. Be prepared if certain shelves are bare of something you need is not available. Availability can be a problem. Have a back-up plan if something you need is not available.

On your list include larger portions of the healthy nutritious items like **Breads** (whole grain English muffins, Ezekiel wraps, corn tortillas, breads); **Grains** (oatmeal, frozen brown rice, pasta); **Meats** (lean beef, chicken salmon, tuna) – If you are agreeable to cutting back on your meat, purchase smaller portions of meat; **Fresh or Frozen Vegetables** (broccoli, kale, onions,

garlic, carrots, **Fruits** (apples, oranges frozen blueberries, frozen dark cherries); **Legumes** (canned Black beans, chick peas, lentils, split peas); **Nuts and seeds** (walnuts, almonds, pumpkin seeds peanut butter); **Oil** (extra virgin olive oil); **Dairy** (milk, butter, eggs, cheese, Greek yogurt); **Flavoring** (dried herbs such as basil, rosemary, spices, vinegar, lemon juice, honey, light salad dressing).

Limit or don't purchase potato chips, soda/pop, cookies, ice cream and sugary treats. These foods are not healthy and they increase food **costs** while providing **poor** nutrition. Skip the processed frozen dinners that are high in sodium, fat and calories.

The biggest risk of becoming infected is from people. If you have to go to a store, go to one that limits the number of people shopping at one time and has taken other precautions.

- **Make a grocery list.**
- **Bring a plastic bag with disinfectant wipes to clean your hands and the grocery cart handle.**
- **Bring your own bags if you can.**
- **Wear a mask.**
- **Wear gloves in the store or wash your hands frequently. Know that your gloves can become infected so be careful what you touch.**
- **When you leave the store, carefully remove the gloves and put on new gloves.**
- **Remove the glove edge on the palm side and pull them off so they are inside out.**
- **Practice social distancing in the store.**
- **Do not touch your face. The mouth, nose and eyes are the most frequent way the virus gets into your body and causes an infection.**
- **Don't use your cell phone in the store since it is a way the virus gets on your face.**
- **Shop quickly and efficiently and alone.**
- **The debit/credit card transaction machine is a frequently touched surface, so immediately use your disinfectant wipes to wipe off your glove and credit card and then place your credit card into a safe container.**

Remember that many, if not most stores, will have an early morning hour or two for seniors and high risk shoppers to do their grocery shopping. If you fit in this category check with your grocery store to see if they offer this service and the days and times it is offered.

GROCERY SHOPPING ONLINE

Shop online for groceries, schedule delivery time or pickup time. Groceries will be:

- **Delivered and placed outside the front door of your home; or**
- **Delivered to your car that is parked in a designated area of the store area; or**
- **Picked up in the store by you**

To receive these online grocery services, you will have to register online providing your name, address, phone number and your debit or credit card information along with your email and a

password for your account. Once that is finished, you can shop for your items online. When you have ordered all of your groceries, you will schedule a time to have the groceries delivered to your home or car or to pick up the groceries.

Delivery of groceries is now taking from 1-10 days to fill your order and deliver them to your doorstep for you to bring them into your home. Even pick-up times can be scheduled days later. Oftentimes, the store website will say you will get your groceries “as soon as today” or “same day delivery.” However, because of the number of people requesting delivery, it is taking longer to receive your delivery requiring us to plan ahead.

INSTACART. You can create an account at Instacart. Instacart’s business is filling grocery orders from many grocery stores and delivering them to your front door. According to the Instacart’s website, Instacart will get groceries at Aldi, Costco or Fresh Thyme. Instacart also will shop at Petco and CVS Pharmacy. You can sign up for an Instacart account here:

<https://www.instacart.com>

Grocery Stores that have multiple stores may offer different delivery and pick up services. Some of these grocery stores have their own delivery and some use Instacart for deliveries.

- **ALDI Grocery stores** are partnering with Instacart to have groceries delivered.
<https://www.aldi.us/en/shop-now/grocery-delivery/>
- **Costco** provides delivery of your groceries to its members through Costco and Instacart.
<https://www.costco.com/grocery-household.html>
- **Target** provides delivery of your groceries
https://www.target.com/c/same-day-delivery/-/N-bswkz?l1_nid=5xt1a&lnk=SDDGlobal
- **Walmart has free curbside pick-up. Some stores may offer delivery.**
https://grocery.walmart.com/?adid=150000000000039636420&veh=wmt&athcpid=CC_Store&athpgid=homepage_ny&athmtid=customerConnection&athznid=customerConnection&athena=true If you do not have an account, please hit the blue button that says “See times” and it will bring you to a site where you can “create an account.

There may be other stores that offer online shopping. If you have a store where you generally shop, put the name of the grocery store in your computer browser to see if they have online shopping and delivery or pick up services. If you do not see anything on their website, call them.

HOW DO YOU DISINFECT YOUR GROCERIES & BAGS AFTER DELIVERY OR PICK-UP?

There are varied expert opinions of whether you need to disinfect your groceries after delivery or pick-up. Many experts say we do not need to disinfect our bags or groceries primarily because the majority of transmission is from respiratory droplets when you are around other people. Their rationale is based on the fact that **the risk is considered low, however, the risk is not zero.**

If you decide to follow a disinfecting process, as I do and many others do since the risk is not zero, you can do the following:

- Use gloves to bring the bags into your home. Remember these gloves have now been contaminated so try not to touch anything other than sorting the groceries with the gloves. You can also bring things into the house with non-gloved hands and wash your hands immediately when you will need touch anything but the grocery items. **DO NOT TOUCH YOUR FACE.**
- Instead of disinfecting with wipes, place the paper bags, canned goods and other packaged foods that you are not going to use for the next few days in a place where they can sit and not be touched. According to experts after 24 hours the vast majority of risk of infection is gone. In 72 hours, the experts say there is no risk of infection.
- **Groceries that you are going to use soon can be treated in the following ways.**
 - Use disinfectant wipes to clean cans and containers that were touched by the individuals preparing your bag – this includes the packaging for frozen foods. Note that freezing does not kill the virus. (Research labs freeze virus samples to preserve them.) Therefore, use disinfectant wipe on freezer and refrigerator containers.
 - Wash your produce with a dish soap that is not toxic if ingested. Do not clean produce with disinfectant wipes or disinfectant sprays – they are toxic. If you do not have a non-toxic soap, experts say to wash the produce with water and use a brush to clean an item with tough skin like avocados or oranges. Blot the produce with a clean paper towel and let it dry off on another clean paper towel before placing in the refrigerator.
 - If you put your groceries on the floor in your home, that area may be contaminated. This may be overkill, but after the bags are moved to another spot I do a soap and water cleaning.

According to the National Institute of Health, a recent research study suggests the following:

- “Scientists found that SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, can be detected in aerosols for up to three hours and on plastic and stainless steel surfaces for up to three days.”
- “It [the virus] remained on cardboard for up to 24 hours and four hours on copper and detectable in aerosols (coughing) for up to three hours.”
- “The findings emphasize the importance of hand washing and disinfecting frequently touched surfaces to protect against infection. “

You can read about the study here:
<https://www.nih.gov/news-events/nih-research-matters/study-suggests-new-coronavirus-may-remain-surfaces-days>