



## A Note from Your Dietitian

I know many of you may be worried about how this changing global situation will affect you and your family's health and well-being. I want to encourage you to be kind to each other and explore positive ways to manage stress. Be aware of people in the community that may have difficulty accessing food, and **look for ways to support each other**. While staying home, try to find ways to care for your physical health, but just as importantly, your emotional, mental and spiritual well-being. Take the opportunity to involve your kids or grandkids in creating some meals to share together and to foster a love of learning this important life skill.

Be well! ~Danielle Simko, Registered Dietitian EAST [danielle.simko@nmninoeyaa.ca](mailto:danielle.simko@nmninoeyaa.ca)

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### What nutrition advice is important for someone who is self-isolating?

If you are self-isolating and especially if you have symptoms, it is important to maintain good nutrition and hydration. **Make sure you are eating and drinking at regular times (vs. "grazing")**, even if you have a low appetite. Contact your dietitian by phone if you have specific concerns related to your diet or reach out to community programs that may offer other assistance.

### Can I boost my immune system through my diet?

Simply put, you cannot "boost" your immune system through diet and no specific food, supplement or natural health product will prevent you from catching COVID-19. **Proper hygiene** can help reduce the risk of infection or spreading infection to others. To date, there is no approved product to prevent, treat or cure COVID-19. *However*, there are many nutrients that are involved with the normal functioning of the immune system and therefore we encourage **eating a variety of healthy foods each day and continue to take any traditional medicines to support immune function.**

**Remember to use leftovers wisely to reduce food waste, and get creative to make meals stretch!**

### What should I do to prepare?

At this time, it makes sense to stock up on a few non-perishable food items so that you do not need to go shopping as often or if you become sick or need to self-isolate, but **avoid panic buying**. Some items to have on hand include:

- Whole grain pasta, rice, or other whole grains
  - Dried or canned beans (kidney, lentil, chickpeas, navy beans, etc.)
- Canned fish (e.g. salmon, tuna), peanut butter
- Cooking oil, pasta sauce, diced tomatoes
  - Canned veg and fruit
- Baking supplies (flour, oatmeal)
  - Condiments

**Perishable foods** that last a long time *when stored properly*:



- Potatoes
- Carrots
- Celery
- Onions
- Frozen fruit & veggies
- Eggs
- Meats (frozen)

❖ See **page 2** for some quick meal ideas that can be made from some basic ingredients!



## Top 10 Simple Meals from Basic Ingredients



Rely on frozen veggies, lean cuts of meat and lower-cost alternatives like beans, as well as high-fibre grains and starches to make balanced meals that taste great too. Here are some suggestions for quick and easy meals, most of which can be made with **basic staples in your pantry or fridge**.

1. **CHILI:** Add your favourite beans (black or kidney) and load it up with whatever vegetables you have in the fridge (e.g. shredded carrots, onions) or canned veggies (e.g. corn, mushrooms), spices (chili powder, garlic powder, cumin) and diced tomatoes.
2. **TUNA MELTS:** Simply top a slice of whole grain bread (or English muffin) with your tuna mixture (tuna, plain yogurt or mayo, lemon juice, black pepper), sliced cheese (optional) and broil in the oven.
3. **TACO SALAD:** Brown lean beef or chicken, add low-sodium taco seasoning, and top with shredded lettuce, tomatoes, cheese, onions, etc.
4. **ONE-POT CASSEROLES:** Boil some whole wheat pasta, drain and put in baking dish with grated cheese (can make a sauce with flour, butter, milk and cheese), frozen broccoli or peas – bake until cheese is melted and heated through.
5. **PITA PIZZAS:** Top a whole grain pita with BBQ sauce or tomato sauce, cheese, sliced chicken, and your favourite toppings (e.g. peppers, mushrooms, onions, pineapple, etc.)
6. **CHICKEN STIR-FRY:** Brown sliced chicken, then add sliced bell peppers and broccoli, and a sesame oil/ginger/garlic sauce for an Asian-inspired meal.
7. **TOPPED UP FISH:** Use frozen white fish (e.g. tilapia) and top with salsa and grated cheese and bake for 10-15 minutes until fish is flaky. Serve with rice and frozen peas/mixed veg
8. **VEGGIE OMELETTE:** Whisk eggs with a splash of milk, add chopped veggies and dried spices and cook in frying pan until each side is lightly browned.
9. **BOILED FISH DINNER:** Sauté onion, garlic, then add potatoes, carrots, celery, broth, desired spices and fish in a pot and let simmer until vegetables are fully cooked.
10. **FRENCH TOAST:** Breakfast for dinner! Whole grain bread can be stored in the freezer – just mix up an egg or two with a splash of milk and cinnamon (if desired), and top with peanut butter and a drizzle of maple syrup (or frozen blueberries).



### References:

1. <http://www.unlockfood.ca/>
2. <https://www.dietitians.ca/News/2020/Advice-for-the-general-public-about-COVID-19>