

# HEALTHY EATING DURING COVID-19

## Focusing on Safety and Health



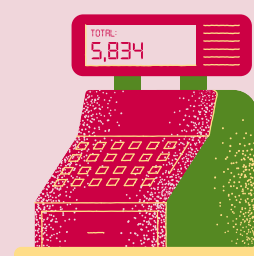
LOMA LINDA UNIVERSITY

School of Public Health

For Careers in Public Health  
Event Only

Several changes, including stay-at-home orders and shifts in employment, occurred in response to COVID-19. For some, these changes led to "panic buying" or hoarding.<sup>1</sup> For others, COVID-19 increased hunger. This handout offers:

- Tips to help you stay safe when grocery shopping.
- Information on healthy, affordable ideas for home-cooked and take-out meals.
- Ways to reduce food waste and help others in need.

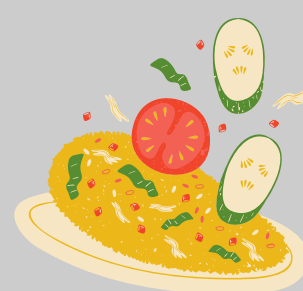


### GROCERY SHOPPING TIPS <sup>2</sup>

- Try online shopping. Several stores offer delivery or pick-up.
- Make a **grocery list** to prevent overspending and hoarding.
- Practice social distancing, wear face masks, and disinfect carts when shopping in-person.
- **Wash your hands frequently** or use hand sanitizer if hand washing stations are not available. The CDC recommends using hand sanitizer with **at least 60% alcohol content**.

### HEALTHY EATING PATTERNS <sup>3</sup>

During COVID-19, it is especially important to maintain immune health. Eating a **balanced diet** high in fruits, vegetables, and whole grains can help. Here are some nutrition tips to support health:



- Select a variety of **produce**. Try plain frozen or canned if fresh is not available.
- Choose **whole-wheat** options for bread, tortillas, or pasta.
- Vary proteins. Try **plant-based proteins**, including soy, beans, nuts, and seeds.
- When choosing animal-proteins, choose lean beef, poultry without skin, and fatty fish.
- Try **low-fat or fat-free** dairy. Soy milk is also a great alternative.
- **Limit frozen dinners and snacks**. These tend to be high in sodium and added sugars.
- Keep your meals **colorful**. Check out MyPlate.com for more information.



### EAT SMART, EVEN WITH TAKEOUT <sup>4</sup>

Taking a day off from cooking, but still want to make healthy choices? Here are some simple ideas to help:

- **Swap** fried sides for fresh fruit or steamed vegetables.
- **Try** foods described as "grilled," "baked," "steamed," or "broiled."
- **Limit** "fried," "creamy," and "breaded" entrees.
- **Replace** sugary drinks, like soda, sweet tea, or punch with water, regular tea, or plain coffee.

### REDUCE FOOD WASTE <sup>5</sup>

**Buying in excess and improper storage can lead to food waste.** During COVID-19, meeting other's food needs is an important part of **building community**. Here are tips to reduce food waste in your home:



- Leftovers? Refrigerate them **within 2 hours** to prevent spoilage.
- Organize your fridge and pantry using the **F.I.F.O.**, or the "**First In First Out**" method. Why? Placing food items with earlier expiration dates in the front helps you use older food first.
- Check out the USDA's **FoodKeeper App** for more advice on food storage to prevent early spoilage.<sup>6</sup>
- Donate unexpired and unopened foods to those in need.

### RESOURCES



Scan here to visit **ChooseMyPlate**.  
<https://www.choosemyplate.gov/>



Scan to visit **Food Loss and Waste** from the USDA.  
<https://www.usda.gov/foodlossandwaste>

## EVEN SMALL CHANGES CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

**References:**  
<sup>1</sup> Feeding America. The Impact of the Coronavirus on Food Insecurity. [https://www.feedingamerica.org/sites/default/files/2020-04/Brief\\_Impact\\_of\\_Covid\\_on\\_Food\\_Insecurity\\_4.22\\_\(002\).pdf](https://www.feedingamerica.org/sites/default/files/2020-04/Brief_Impact_of_Covid_on_Food_Insecurity_4.22_(002).pdf). Published March 30, 2020. Accessed July 24, 2020.  
<sup>2</sup> Running Essential Errands. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/essential-goods-services.html>. Accessed July 24, 2020.  
<sup>3</sup> U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and U.S. Department of Agriculture. 2015 – 2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans  
<sup>4</sup> Ellis E. Tips for Ordering Takeout or Delivery. EatRight. <https://www.eatright.org/food/nutrition/eating-as-a-family/tips-for-ordering-takeout-or-delivery>. Published February 5, 2020. Accessed July 24, 2020.  
<sup>5</sup> Jedermann R, Nicometo M, Uysal I, Lang W. Reducing food losses by intelligent food logistics. Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society A: Mathematical, Physical and Engineering Sciences. 2014;372(2017):20130302. doi:10.1098/rsta.2013.0302  
<sup>6</sup> United States Department of Agriculture. Food Loss and Waste. USDA. <https://www.usda.gov/foodlossandwaste>. Accessed July 25, 2020.