

Shopping and Food Preparation Tips During Times Of Physical Distancing

It is very important to continue to get adequate nourishment, especially in times of illness or potential illness. Eating enough, and a wide variety of, food helps keep the immune system as strong as possible, which is critical during a pandemic.

Shopping Ideas

It is recommended to have enough food for at least two weeks in your home. If you are having trouble affording this, consider contacting a food pantry or ask someone on your treatment team to assist you in finding resources. The best method of getting groceries is to have them delivered to your home. If you are not able to do this, the next best option is to have a member of your household pick up groceries at the grocery store using online ordering. Grocery stores in areas with lower rates of COVID-19 are preferred. The other option is to pick up groceries using a service such as Hannaford Online or Order Ahead Shaw's, where you can order online and pick up at the store. This allows for maximum physical distancing.

- Begin by looking to see what you have in the cupboard, refrigerator, and freezer and make a list. As needed, veer off the list if something else appeals to you or if there is a shortage of the item on your list.
- Think about shopping for a variety of foods.
- To help stretch a shopping trip to last longer, try frozen or canned items such as meat, fish, poultry, cheeses, fruits, vegetables, and soups.
- Buying in bulk will reduce cost and allow you to have enough food for a longer period of time.
- Eggs are inexpensive, are a great source of protein, and have a relatively long shelf life.
- Buy box mixes for baked items like brownies, cookies, cakes, and biscuits. Don't forget the icing for an easy dessert!
- Remember box mixes for rice, quinoa, and pasta.
- Consider jarred spaghetti sauce, Alfredo sauce, and gravy.
- Shelf-stable juices, dried milk powder, or milk substitutes (e.g., almond milk or soymilk) will reduce the frequency of having to get groceries. Frozen juices and other fruit drinks are also helpful for this.
- Buy peanut butter, jelly, bread, chips, soup, and fresh fruit. In particular, apples and pears will keep for a longer time. Add cookies, ice cream, and a glass of milk and you have an easy and low cost meal!
- Dry cereal and oatmeal are helpful to have on-hand. Remember condiments like brown sugar, syrup, and cream.
- Crackers, sliced cheese, pudding, and yogurts are nice to have around for snacks.
- Potatoes, carrots, and onions are good staples and can help to make a wide range of foods tastier.
- Fresh ground meats purchased in bulk can be portioned and frozen for later use. These can be turned into burgers or used in soups and pasta sauces.
- Make sure you have enough butter or margarine. Butter can be stored in the freezer as needed.

Cooking and Food Preparation Ideas

- Look at what you have on-hand for fresh and perishable foods.
- Perishable foods are those that have a short shelf life or time that they are fresh, such as lettuce, tomatoes, and certain other fruits and vegetables.
- Check the condition of your fresh fruits and vegetables and use the older ones, or the ones showing signs of wilting, first.
- Check the expiration dates on refrigerated foods and bring the older to the front to use sooner. This will help you prioritize what to use first so that nothing is wasted.
- Do the same for the foods in your cupboards. Use open boxes of crackers, cookies, and cereal first. Pull them to the front of your cupboard for easy access.
- Make ground meats and poultry stretch further by adding them to large pots of soup or pasta sauce.
- Homemade soup is a great way to use fresh vegetables that are getting a bit tired. Throw in leftover potato, rice, or other odds and ends in the refrigerator.
- When possible, make more than one portion of a meal to use later, which makes meal preparation easier and takes less effort.
- Leftover foods should be eaten or frozen within three days. When reheating leftovers, be sure they reach a temperature of at least 165 degrees.
- Bread and rolls will last longer in the refrigerator.

This is a challenging time but can also be a great time to get creative with what you are cooking and eating. **The most important recommendation is to keep eating for recovery!** Please remember that your treatment team is here to help you successfully continue your recovery during this time. Please let us know what questions you may have and how we can best continue to be of assistance to you.

For up-to-date information about COVID-19 and recommendations, please visit the Center for Disease Control and Prevention websites:

Federal: www.cdc.gov

State: www.maine.gov/dhhs/mecdc/

For more information about The New England Eating Disorders Program (NEED) at Sweetser, please contact our intake office at **207.294.4522** or visit sweetser.org.

