

## Eating Healthy During a Crisis

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Eating healthy and staying active should always be a priority as it plays a significant role in our long-term wellness. However, what do we do when crisis hits? How should we react when there is a natural disaster or disease pandemic such as COVID-19? Due to these types of challenges, food may become scarce, hours of operation in grocery stores may be changed, and forced quarantines might be put in place. During times of crisis, our nutrition and health can take a back seat which can negatively impact our future health, especially for vulnerable population.

Times of crisis can lead to anxiety and stress. Poor nutrition and limited physical activity can compound the effects. While most of us are at home, managing work, children, elderly ones, and other family members, proper nutrition may not be our top priority. Inability to follow a routine may lead to stress eating and food cravings. Let us see how we can keep eating healthy and nutritious food during this difficult time!

1. Plan balanced meals with more vegetables, fruits and whole grain foods. Use smaller meat portion and include some plant-based protein like beans, lentils and legumes.
2. Designate mealtimes for regulating eating habits.
3. Eat in moderation, do not overindulge.
4. Plan recipes with minimal (2-3) main ingredients, you might have limited resource availability at this time.

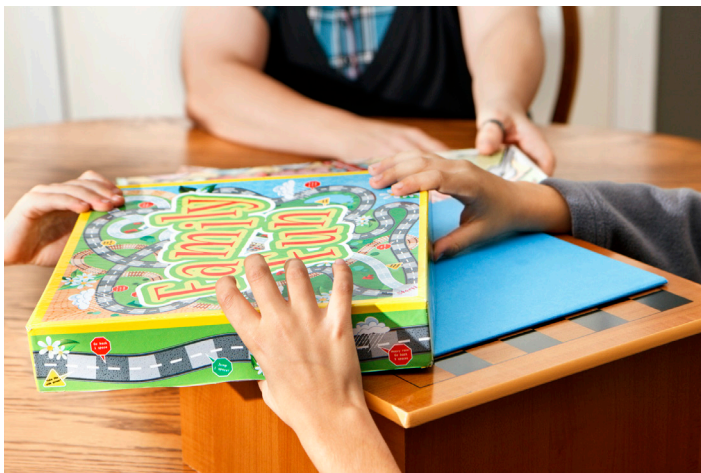
5. Look for easy and quick to make recipes, to be able to balance time between work, family, cooking and cleaning.
6. Cook foods like soups, lentils and vegetables in bulk and freeze the leftovers for later use to save time.
7. Fix easy, nutritious salads as and when possible to get enough vitamins and minerals.
8. Stay away from binging on snacks every now and then.
9. Plan meals in advance and do meal prep to cater different needs of the family members.
10. Avoid, or limit, ordering/takeout food from restaurants. This way you get to control the ingredients and won't have to expose yourself, or others, to potential hazards.
11. Involve kids and family members in cooking and cleaning. This will be helpful in reducing the overall stress.



Finally, during a crisis like COVID-19 there may be extended periods of time where you may have to stay at home. Make best use of the time with your family. Cook together, play games together, and participate in regular fitness activities together which has shown to improve health and reduce mental anxiety. No one desires a crisis, but we can take this time to proactively improve our nutrition and physical fitness while waiting for the challenge to be resolved.

## References

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