

# PRACTICE MINDFUL EATING DURING SELF-QUARANTINE AND BEYOND!

Booklet 2



# MINDFUL EATING BUILDS YOUR IMMUNE SYSTEM

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During this period of **self-quarantine**, many of us are working from home until further notice, trying to handle it all between family time and proper work hours. In the middle of all that, trying to keep eating healthy and exercise can be a little challenging.

*Good nutrition and being physically active, is crucial for health, particularly in times when the immune system might need to fight back.*

Limited access to fresh foods may compromise opportunities to continue eating a healthy and varied diet. It can also potentially lead to an increased consumption of highly processed foods, which tend to be high in fats, sugars and salt. Nonetheless, even with few and limited ingredients, one can continue eating a diet that supports good health.

*It's a great time to reconnect with the joy of homemade cooking, using some simple and affordable pantry staples and non-perishable food items.*



# QUESTION WHAT YOU EAT

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- ❖ Mindful eating means being fully attentive to your food—as you buy, prepare, serve, and consume it.
- ❖ Although the ideal mindful-eating food choices are similar to the Mediterranean diet—centred on fruits, vegetables, whole grains, seeds, nuts, and vegetable oils—the technique can be applied to a cheeseburger and fries.
- ❖ By truly paying attention to the food you eat, you may indulge in these types of foods less often.

***Plan a daily routine of healthy meals, snacks that suits your lifestyle***



<http://www.euro.who.int/en/health-topics/health-emergencies/coronavirus-covid-19/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov-technical-guidance>



# CONSIDER THE SOURCE

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### ❖ *Create a healthy eating environment*

- ❖ [clear out unhealthy foods & snacks (refined, high sugar, high salt, high fat), create a comfortable space to sit down and eat, place a bowl of fresh fruit on the table].



### *Be strategic about the use of ingredients - prioritize fresh products*

- ❖ Use fresh ingredients and those that have a shorter shelf life first. If fresh products, especially fruits, vegetables and reduced-fat dairy products continue to be available, prioritize these over non-perishables. Frozen fruits and vegetables can also conveniently be used over longer periods of time and often have a similar nutrient profile to fresh foods. To avoid food waste, you may consider freezing any leftovers for another meal.

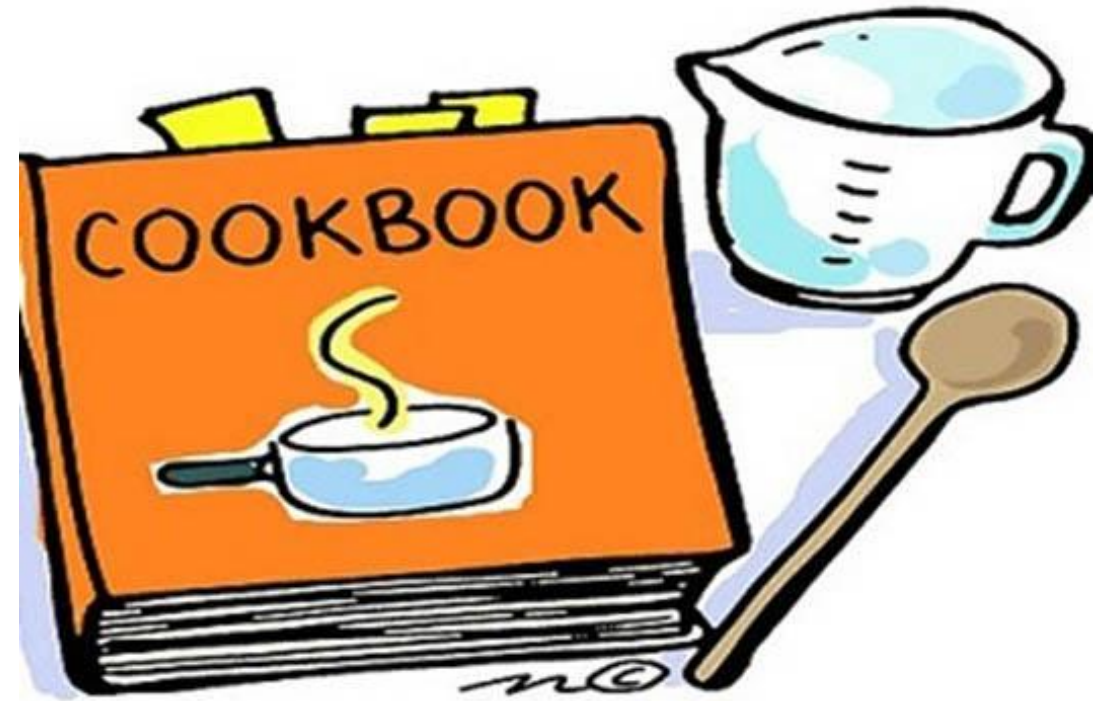




# RECIPES

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- ❖ Look for ***healthy recipes online*** and print or from old magazines at home. Or create a digital recipe folder on you PC or start a Pinterest board. This will motivate you to try out new healthy and tasty meals for you and your family.
- ❖ File the recipes into categories:
  - \*chicken      \*meat      \*fish
  - \*vegetables   \*salad      \*vegetarian
  - \*healthy desserts      \*beverages, etc.
- ❖ Use recipes to plan ahead for weekly meals, lunchboxes and snacks and to create shopping lists.
- ❖ Start a family tradition



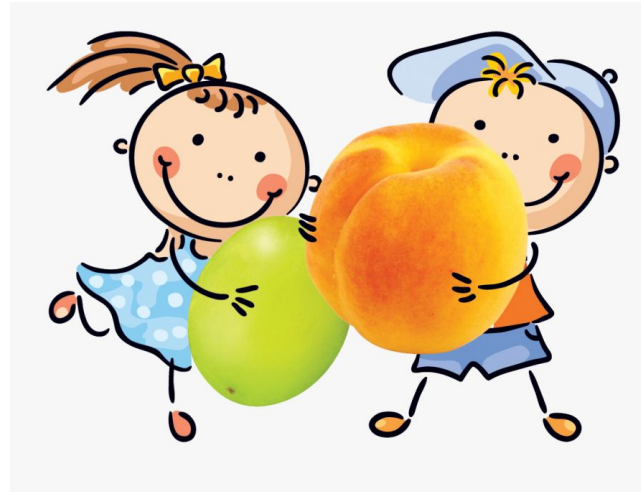
# PLAN HEALTHY MEALS AND SNACKS

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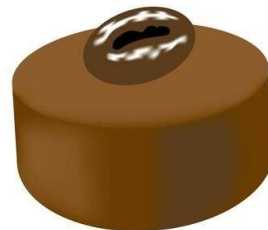
- ◆ *Eat healthy meal(s) regularly – at least 3 times a day!*



- ◆ Eat fresh fruit daily – 3-5 portions daily



- ◆ Have a treat now and again – enjoy a bite-sized chocolate!



- ◆ Healthy lunch ideas for school or work



# STOCK UP WITH HEALTHY FOODS

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- ❖ Assess what you already have at home and plan your intake (do a weekly meal plan with snacks and lunch boxes).
- ❖ Use healthy recipes from your recipe file and create a shopping list.
- ❖ Make sure to adhere to your shopping list (never go shopping on an empty stomach) and avoid impulse buying.
- ❖ You might feel the need to purchase large amounts of foods during this period of self-quarantine, but make sure to consider and utilize what is already in your pantry, as well as foods with shorter shelf life. This way you can avoid food waste and allow others to access the food they need.
- ❖ Panic buying behavior may have negative consequences, such as an increase in food prices, overconsumption of food and an unequal distribution of products. It is therefore important to consider your own needs, as well as those of others.

***Make a plan &  
take only  
what you  
need!***

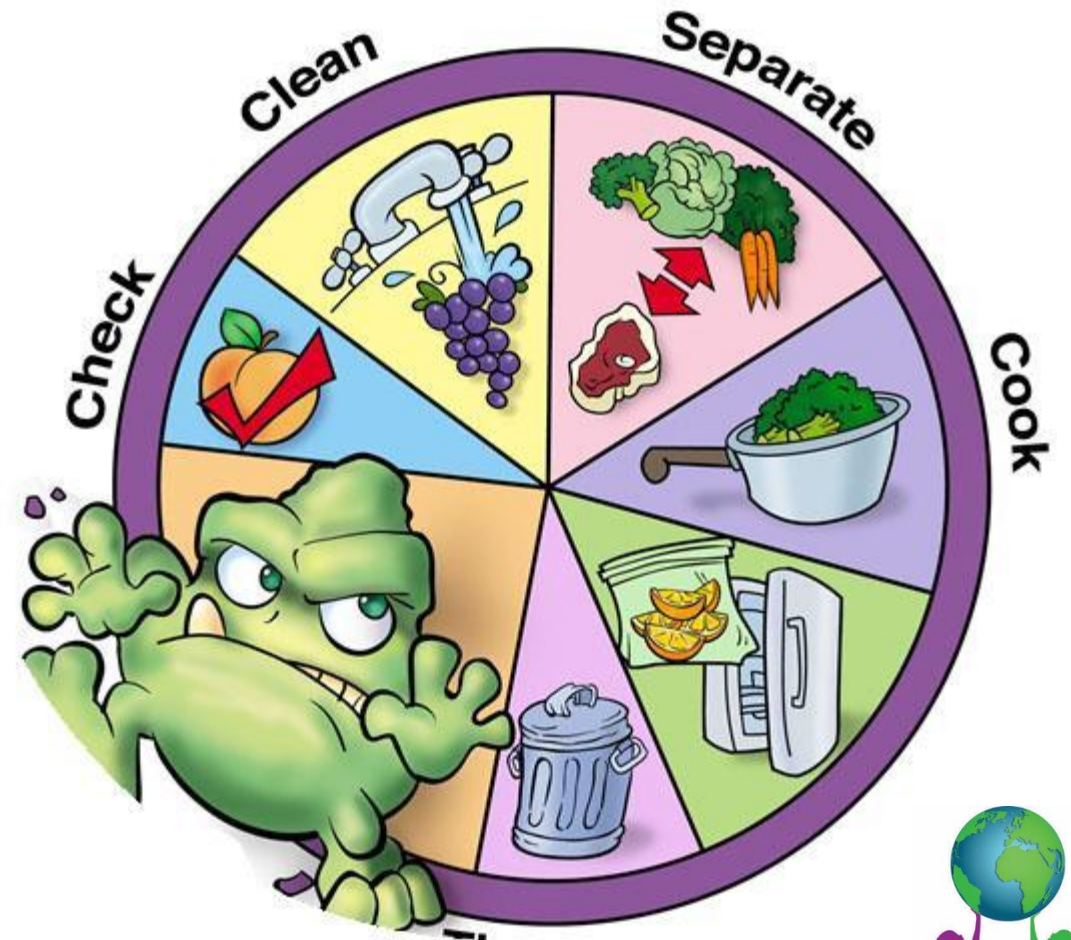




# FOLLOW SAFE FOOD HANDLING PRACTICES

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- ❖ Food safety is a prerequisite for food security and a healthy diet. Only safe food is healthy food. When preparing food for yourself and others, it is important to follow good food hygiene practices to avoid food contamination and foodborne diseases. The key principles of good food hygiene include:
- ❖ Keep your hands, kitchen and utensils clean.
- ❖ Separate raw and cooked food, especially raw meat and fresh produce.
- ❖ Cook your food thoroughly.
- ❖ Keep your food at safe temperatures, either below 5 °C or above 60 °C; and
- ❖ Use safe water and raw material.
- ❖ By following these five key recommendations for safer food, you can prevent many common foodborne diseases.





# INVOLVE YOUR KIDS IN THE KITCHEN

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- ❖ Stirring ingredients (at room temperature).
- ❖ Mashing with a fork or potato masher.
- ❖ Spooning ingredients into scales, cups etc. It teaches portion control.

**Note:** When involving children in cooking, it is important to keep meals simple and to teach children about proper food safety (including hand washing, cleaning surfaces and avoiding consumption of certain raw ingredients).



# MAKE MEAL PREPARATION A FAMILY AFFAIR

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- ◆ Make your own *healthy pizza* together at home!
- ◆ Let each member of the family choose their own topping.
- ◆ Easy homemade pizza:

## INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup *warm water* 105-110 degrees F
- 1 TBS *sugar*
- 1 TBS *active dry yeast*
- 1 TBS *olive oil*
- 1 to 1 1/2 cups *all-purpose flour*
- 1 cup *whole wheat flour*
- 1 tsp *salt*



# MAKE MEAL PREPARATION A FAMILY AFFAIR

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## INSTRUCTIONS

- ❑ Preheat oven to 450 degrees F. Grease a pizza pan and set aside.
- ❑ Put warm water into a large mixing bowl.
- ❑ Add sugar and yeast and stir to combine.
- ❑ Let mixture sit for 5 minutes, or until it becomes frothy and bubbles form.
- ❑ Add olive oil and gently stir to combine.
- ❑ Add 2 cups of flour and salt and mix with a spatula until a ball begins to form (dough will still be slightly sticky). Add more flour as needed to form a dough ball.
- ❑ Transfer to a floured surface and knead into a smooth dough, adding up to ½ cup extra flour if needed.
- ❑ Roll dough into your desired shape and gently transfer to your prepared pan.
- ❑ To ensure the dough doesn't form air pockets, use a fork to prick to the dough all around (gently so you do not poke holes all the way through the crust).
- ❑ Add pizza sauce and toppings of choice!  
(tomato paste, caramelized onion, lots of crushed garlic, pitted olives, sliced mushrooms, crushed pineapple, sliced figs, shredded baby spinach leaves, rocket, oregano or basil, grated low-fat cheese etc.)
- ❑ Bake on the lower rack of your oven for around 15-20 minutes until the crust looks crispy and lightly browned.
- ❑ Let cool, cut and serve.



# ENJOY THE EXPERIENCE OF EATING SCRUMPTIOUS MEALS!

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- ❖ *Sit down and eat at a table*
- ❖ *Come to the table with an appetite* – *but not when ravenously hungry.*
- ❖ If you skip meals, you may be so eager to get anything in your stomach that your first priority is filling the void instead of enjoying your food.
- ❖ *Start with a small portion.* It may be helpful to limit the size of your plate to nine inches or less.
- ❖ *Appreciate your food.* Pause for a minute or two before you begin eating to contemplate everything and everyone it took to bring the meal to your table. Silently express your gratitude for the opportunity to enjoy delicious food and the companions you're enjoying it with.





# ENJOY THE EXPERIENCE OF EATING SCRUMPTIOUS MEALS!

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- ❖ *Bring all your senses to the meal.* When you're cooking, serving, and eating your food, be attentive to colour, texture, aroma, and even the sounds different foods make as you prepare them. As you chew your food, try identifying all the ingredients, especially seasonings.
- ❖ *Take small bites.* It's easier to taste food completely when your mouth isn't full. Put down your utensil between bites.
- ❖ *Chew thoroughly.* Chew well until you can taste the essence of the food. (You may have to chew each mouthful 20 to 40 times, depending on the food.) You may be surprised at all the flavours that are released.
- ❖ *Eat slowly.* If you follow the advice above, you won't bolt your food down. Devote at least five minutes to mindful eating before you chat with your tablemates.



# LIMIT YOUR SALT INTAKE AND FLAVOUR FOODS WITH HERBS AND SPICES

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- ❖ The availability of fresh foods may decrease and it may therefore become necessary to rely more on canned, frozen or processed foods. Many of these foods contain high levels of salt.
- ❖ The WHO recommends consuming less than 5 g of salt per day. In order to achieve this, prioritize foods with reduced or no added salt.
- ❖ You may also consider rinsing canned foods such as vegetables and beans, to remove some of the excess sodium.
- ❖ Be aware that pickled foods often contain high levels of sodium too. In many countries, 50–75% of the salt intake comes from the foods we eat, rather than what we add ourselves.
- ❖ Given that you might be consuming enough salt already, avoid adding extra salt when cooking and to your meals at the table.

**Herbs:** They can be used fresh or dry

- ❖ Grow your own herb garden; buy plants at your supermarket or nursery and put each one in its own container in your windowsill in a sunny spot, water regularly and use cuttings in food.
- ❖ Freeze whole herbs in plastic bags; you don't need to thaw them, simply cut off as much as you need and add to dishes.
- ❖ Dried herbs are more concentrated than fresh herbs; for every teaspoon of dried herbs, use one tablespoon of fresh herbs.
- ❖ Make your own herbal oils and vinegar; add favorite herbs and spices to olive oil or vinegar. Leave to flavor for a few days and use in salad dressings or stir-fry's.

**Spices:** Add Flavor and Aroma

- ❖ Spices can transform a meal by adding a range of flavors, from a hint of sweetness to a kick of heat. They also give beautiful aromas that are often our first determining factor for whether we want to eat a meal or not.
- ❖ Enhance taste of food. We always think of salt as our go-to when a meal tastes too bland, but there are other spices, like cumin, that bring out the natural flavors of food.
- ❖ Change or enhance color. If you've ever eaten at an Indian restaurant you may have noticed that many of the dishes have a deep yellow, orange or red color. That's because the spices used in typical Indian cooking, such as turmeric and paprika, give color to the foods making them brighter and more appealing.

# LIMIT YOUR SUGAR INTAKE

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- ❖ The WHO recommends that ideally less than 5% of total energy intake for adults should come from free sugars (about 6 teaspoons).
- ❖ If you crave something sweet, fresh fruit should always be the priority. Frozen fruits, canned fruits in juice rather than syrup, and dried fruits with no added sugar are also good options.
- ❖ When other dessert options are chosen, ensure that they are low in sugar and consume small portions. Watch out for low fat options, as these are often high in added sugars.



# LIMIT YOUR FAT INTAKE

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- ❖ The WHO recommends limiting total fat intake to less than 30% of total energy intake, of which no more than 10% should come from saturated fat.
- ❖ To achieve this, opt for cooking methods that require less or no fat, such as steaming, grilling or sautéing instead of frying foods.
- ❖ If needed, use small amounts of unsaturated oils like rapeseed, olive or sunflower oil to cook foods. Prefer foods that contain healthy sources of unsaturated fats, such as fish and nuts.
- ❖ To limit saturated fats, trim excess fat from meat and poultry and choose skinless options. Reduce foods such as red and fatty meats, butter and full-fat dairy products, palm oil, coconut oil, solid shortening and lard.
- ❖ Avoid trans fats as much as possible. Read nutrition labels to ensure that hydrogenated oils are not listed in the ingredients.
- ❖ If food labels are not available, avoid foods which commonly contain trans fats such as processed and fried foods, like doughnuts and baked goods – including biscuits, pie crusts, frozen pizzas, cookies, crackers and margarine.
- ❖ If in doubt, minimally processed foods and ingredients are better choices.





# CONSUME ENOUGH FIBRE

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- ❖ Fibre contributes to a healthy digestive system and offers a prolonged feeling of fullness, which helps prevent overeating.
- ❖ To ensure an adequate fiber intake, aim to include vegetables, fruit, pulses and wholegrain foods in all meals.
- ❖ Wholegrains foods include oats, brown pasta and rice, quinoa and whole-wheat bread and wraps, rather than refined grain foods such as white pasta and rice, and white bread.



# STAY HYDRATED

# AVOID OR REDUCE YOUR ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION

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- ❖ Good hydration is crucial for optimal health. Whenever available and safe for consumption, tap water is the healthiest and cheapest drink. It is also the most sustainable, as it produces no waste, compared to bottled water.
- ❖ Drinking water instead of sugar-sweetened beverages is a simple way to limit your intake of sugar and excess calories. To enhance its taste, fresh or frozen fruits like berries or slices of citrus fruits may be added, as well as cucumber or herbs such as mint, lavender or rosemary.
- ❖ Avoid drinking large amounts of strong coffee, strong tea, and especially caffeinated soft drinks and energy drinks. These may lead to dehydration and can negatively impact your sleeping patterns.

***Drink -8-10 glasses of  
water per day***

- ❖ Alcohol is a mind-altering and dependence-producing substance, but it also weakens the immune system. Thus, alcohol use and especially heavy use undermines your body's ability to cope with infectious disease, including COVID-19.
- ❖ It is recommended that alcohol be avoided, but especially when in self-quarantine. As a psychoactive substance, alcohol also affects your mental state and decision-making and makes you more vulnerable to risks. Alcohol consumption is also known to increase symptoms of depression, anxiety, fear and panic – symptoms that can intensify during isolation and self-quarantine. Consuming alcohol is not a good coping mechanism, although you might think that it will help you deal with stress.
- ❖ Alcohol also makes certain medications less effective, while increasing the potency and toxicity of others. Do not consume alcohol in combination with pain medication, as alcohol will interfere with your liver functions and might cause serious problems, including liver failure.
- ❖ Under no circumstances should you consume any type of alcoholic products as a preventive or treatment measure against COVID-19.
- ❖ Alcohol is not a necessary part of your diet and not part of a healthy lifestyle and should therefore not be on your shopping list.

# EAT FOODS THAT WILL HELP YOU SLEEP BETTER

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- ❖ *Adequate sleep* is a crucial part of a healthy lifestyle. It elevates mood and helps improve your cognitive skills and cardiovascular health, among other things.
- ❖ Eating foods that induce sleep is a natural and effective way to fight insomnia.
- ❖ *Consume foods that are “rich in tryptophan*, such as bananas, potatoes, almonds, seeds, and whole-grain oats (tryptophan is an amino acid which is involved in the synthesis of melatonin, the sleep hormone).



- ❖ Our gut or the gastrointestinal tract is home to 90% of your serotonin, a chemical neurotransmitter that affects your mood, appetite, sleep, memory, etc.
- ❖ It also acts as a barrier that keeps viruses and harmful bacteria at bay. When you're stressed out, your digestive system may not work properly and may get inflamed. This, in turn, can impact your mood.
- ❖ For a healthy digestive system, incorporate gut-friendly foods in your daily diet, like natural yogurt, walnuts, almonds, oat bran and pumpkin seeds.

## Nuts & Seeds

*Particularly unsalted and unsweetened, these may serve as healthy snacks or added to porridge, salads and other meals. Nut butters or spreads are also good options, as long as you choose 100% nut butters which do not have added sugar, salt, or partially hydrogenated or palm oils.*

***Fermented foods*** - (yoghurt, kimchi, sauerkraut, kombucha) are rich in probiotic bacteria so by consuming fermented foods you are adding beneficial bacteria and enzymes to your overall intestinal flora, increasing the health of your gut microbiome and digestive system and enhancing the immune system.





# BEST FOOD BUYS

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*Overview of foods with high nutritional value which are generally affordable, accessible and have a longer shelf life. You may use this list as inspiration for what to keep at home during self-quarantine or longer home stays.*



- ❖ The WHO recommends consuming a minimum of 400 g (i.e. 5 portions) of fruits and vegetables per day. Citrus fruits like oranges, clementine's and grapefruit are good options, as well as bananas and apples, which can also be cut into smaller pieces and frozen for later consumption or to add to smoothies.
- ❖ Root vegetables such as carrots, turnips and beets, as well as vegetables like cabbage, broccoli and cauliflower are relatively nonperishable.
- ❖ Garlic, ginger and onions are also great options to keep at home, as they can be used to add flavor to a variety of meals.



- ❖ All frozen fruits such as berries, pineapple and mango are great options, as they still contain high levels of fiber and vitamins and are often less expensive than the fresh versions.
- ❖ These frozen fruits can be added to juices, smoothies or porridge or eaten with low-fat plain yogurt after defrosting.
- ❖ Frozen vegetables are nutritious, quick to prepare, and consuming them can help reach the recommendations, even when fresh foods are scarce.



- ❖ Although fresh or frozen vegetables are normally the preferred option, canned vegetables such as mushrooms, spinach, peas, tomatoes and green beans are good alternatives with a longer shelf life, to ensure a sufficient intake of vegetables.
- ❖ Remember to choose, when possible, options with low or no added salt.

# BEST FOOD BUYS

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**Beans, chickpeas, lentils and other pulses** are great sources of vegetable protein, fibre, vitamins and minerals. These are also rather versatile and can be used for stews, soups, spreads and salads.



**Wholegrain rice and pasta, oats, buckwheat, quinoa and other unrefined whole grains** are excellent foods as their shelf life is long, they can easily be prepared, and they contribute to fibre intake. Unsalted crackers and wholegrain bread are also good options. Bread can conveniently be frozen for later use, ideally in slices for easier defrosting, to extend its freshness.

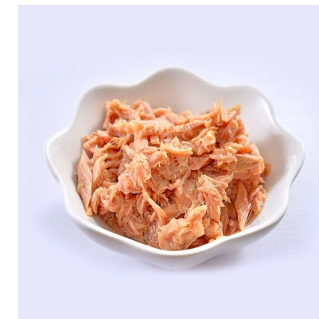


**Dairy products** provide an inexpensive source of protein and other nutrients. Choosing reduced-fat dairy is one way to reduce saturated fat consumption, while also getting all the benefits of dairy. UHT milk in a can or carton will be relatively shelf stable. Powdered milk is another shelf-stable option.

**Eggs** are a great source of protein and nutrients and are incredibly versatile. Boil or poach rather than fry.



**Starchy roots such as potatoes, sweet potatoes and cassava** are also long-lasting and good sources of carbohydrates. These should ideally be baked, boiled or steamed. Leave the skins on for extra fibre and flavour.



**Canned tuna, sardines and other fish** are good sources of protein and healthy fats. These can make a healthy addition to salads, pastas or whole grain breads. If possible, choose fish canned in water rather than oil or brine.



Thank you.

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