

How to Make Healthy Food During Coronavirus

You're likely spending most (or all) of your time at home because of the COVID-19 coronavirus pandemic. Because of the pandemic, you may be limiting trips to the grocery store or may have limited amounts of fresh ingredients. However, you...

Method 1 of 3:

Enjoying a Healthy Breakfast

1. **Eat oatmeal with fruit for breakfast.** Plain oatmeal is a healthy food that's packed with fiber and other nutrients.^[1] Mix your oatmeal with fresh or frozen fruit to sweeten it rather than adding sugars. If you like, you can add a little honey, agave, maple syrup, or sugar-free sweetener to add a little extra flavor. Try one of these recipes:
 1. Add apples and cinnamon to stove-top oatmeal.
 2. Mix bananas, almonds, cinnamon, and a splash of vanilla extract into stove-top oatmeal.
 3. Combine a cup of milk with 1/2 cup (85 g) of oatmeal and a dash of cinnamon. Let it sit overnight in the refrigerator, then add fresh or frozen bananas, berries, or mango.
2. **Mix fruit into Greek yogurt.** You can use either fresh or frozen fruit to add flavor and nutrition to your Greek yogurt. Put your yogurt into a bowl or small jar, then add your fruit as desired. Mix the fruit into the yogurt, then enjoy.^[2]
 1. Try strawberries and bananas, strawberries and blueberries, kiwi and banana, or peaches and blueberries.
 2. You can also top your yogurt with granola or nuts.^[3]
3. **Make an egg white omelet.** First, add a little olive or avocado oil to a skillet and saute your omelet veggies until they're soft. Transfer the veggies to a clean bowl, then add your egg whites to the pan. Cook the egg whites until they're set, which takes about 1-2 minutes. Then, top the egg whites with the veggies and a bit of cheese, if you like. Fold the egg white in half to finish the omelet.^[4]
 1. Yummy veggie options include onions, red or green bell peppers, mushrooms, and spinach.
 2. If you prefer, make an egg white bowl instead. Saute your veggies and put them in a bowl. Then, make your egg whites like you usually would. Transfer the egg whites to the bowl of veggies, then top with cheese. You can also add hot sauce, sauce, or pico de gallo if you like.
4. **Prepare a quinoa breakfast bowl.** Quinoa is high in protein and very filling, and it will keep for a long time in your pantry. Prepare your quinoa as directed on the packaging. For a savory breakfast, top it with an egg and sauteed veggies. For a sweet breakfast, add a bit of yogurt and some fruit.^[5]
 1. If you're making savory quinoa, consider cooking it in vegetable broth for extra flavor.

Tip: If you make up a big batch of quinoa, you can refrigerate the excess for about 3-5 days.

Method 2 of 3:

Cooking Lunch and Dinner

1. **Make a big salad and top it with beans, canned tuna, or leftover chicken.** For an easy meal, put mixed greens into a bowl. Then, add veggies like chopped cucumbers, sliced carrots, and tomatoes. Toss with your favorite salad dressing, then top with black beans, canned tuna, or chicken.^[6]
 1. If you like, add a little cheese for flavor.
2. **Keep it simple with veggies, lean protein, and whole grains.** For an easy healthy meal, fill half your plate with fresh, sauteed, or roasted vegetables. Then, add about 3-4 ounces of lean protein, which should make up about 1/4 of your plate. Fill the remaining quarter of your plate with whole grains.^[7]
 1. For instance, enjoy a fish filet with cilantro-lime brown rice, sauteed peppers and onions, and roasted zucchini.
 2. You could also pair a chicken breast with roasted veggies, a small salad, and quinoa pilaf.
3. **Make a burrito bowl with lean protein, veggies, and whole grains.** Start with brown rice or quinoa. Then, fill about half the bowl with sauteed or fresh veggies. Top with chicken, turkey, beans, or egg whites. Add fresh cilantro, green onions, or peppers if you have some.^[8]
 1. For your veggies, try sauteing onions and bell peppers. Add canned corn in the last few minutes of cooking to warm it up. Then, toss in some fresh tomatoes when it's time to serve your burrito bowl. Add flavor with cumin, chili powder, salt, pepper, and lime juice.^[9]
 2. Season your protein with salt and pepper. If you have some, add chili powder or chipotle chili powder.

Tip: If you have leftover chicken or turkey, use it in your burrito bowl.

4. **Add veggies to a whole grain pasta dish.** For a healthy pasta dish, make half of your dish veggies.^[10] Cook whole-grain pasta as directed on the package. Meanwhile, saute your veggies in a little olive or avocado oil for about 7 minutes. Then, add your favorite pasta sauce to the pan and heat it until it's warm. Mix the sauce and vegetables into the pasta before you serve it.^[11]
 1. Pick a low-sodium, low calorie pasta sauce. You can also use about 1 tbsp (17 g) of tomato paste and a 28-oz (794 g) can of diced tomatoes instead of pasta sauce if you season it with Italian seasoning.^[12]
 2. If you want more protein in your dish, stir in some shredded chicken breast.^[13]
5. **Prepare vegetable-based or bean soups.** Soups are an easy way to incorporate veggies into your meals. Plus, you can use frozen veggies alongside fresh. Make a basic soup with broth, veggies, and the seasonings you have at home, or follow a recipe. Here are some ideas:^[14]
 1. Combine chicken, beef, or vegetable broth with onions, celery, and root vegetables. Add cabbage and thawed frozen green beans if you have them. Season to taste.
 2. Make black bean soup with black beans, chicken or veggie broth, and a can of diced tomatoes. Add salt, pepper, cilantro, and peppers if you have them.
 3. Prepare bean chili with black beans, onions, chopped sweet potatoes, and a jar of salsa.
6. **Combine quinoa and veggies for a nutrient-dense dish.** Prepare your quinoa according to the package instructions, but consider making it with vegetable broth instead of water. Mix in a can of rinsed corn, a can of rinsed black beans, a handful of fresh cherry tomatoes, a handful of cilantro, and 5-6 chopped green onions. Finally, toss with a blend of 4 US tbsp (59 mL) of olive oil and juice from 2 limes, as well as cumin, black pepper, salt, and red pepper flakes, to taste.^[15]
 1. Play around with your quinoa! For instance, mix sauteed or roasted veggies into cooked quinoa, top your quinoa dish with feta cheese or tahini, or incorporate lean protein if you prefer.^[16]

Keeping Your Kitchen Stocked

1. **Buy produce that has a long shelf-life.** You probably know that vegetables and fruit are healthy for you. However, it might feel hard to keep them on-hand, especially if you're limiting trips to the store.

Fortunately, there are options that can last for a few weeks to months. Purchase extras of the following items, which have a long shelf-life:^[17]

1. Onions
2. Peppers, including bell peppers
3. Celery
4. Carrots
5. Apples
6. Oranges
7. Limes
8. Lemons
9. Cabbage
10. Squash
11. Potatoes, including Russet potatoes, sweet potatoes, and red potatoes.
12. Garlic

Tip: Keep peppers, celery, carrots, apples, oranges, limes, lemons, cabbage, green onions, and squash in your refrigerator so they keep for longer.

2. **Stash frozen veggies and fruit in your freezer so you have options.** Luckily, frozen foods are just as healthy as fresh, so you can round out your options using frozen foods. Choose veggies you like or that are useful for common recipes, like broccoli or mixed veggies. Try to buy enough to last your family for about 2 weeks at a time.^[18]

1. Buy pre-packaged frozen veggies when you can.
2. Many fruits, such as bananas, berries, mangos, peaches, cherries, and strawberries, are easy to freeze at home.^[19]
3. Try not to over purchase so that there's enough food for everyone. You can always get more later.

3. **Fill your pantry with healthy, shelf-stable staples.** When you think of shelf-stable foods, your mind might immediately go to processed boxed foods or sugary cereal. However, a lot of healthy ingredients are shelf-stable, so you can eat delicious and well-balanced meals without turning to 'junk food.' Stock up on 2-4 weeks of the following items:^[20]

1. Canned fish
2. Chicken, beef, and vegetable broth
3. Dry or canned beans
4. Quinoa, brown rice, and whole wheat or bean pasta
5. Pasta sauce and tomato products
6. Nut and nut butters
7. Oatmeal
8. Canned vegetables
9. Low sodium soups and chili
10. Plain popcorn

Tip: If you buy a big bag of rice or quinoa, it may last longer than 4 weeks, and that's okay. However, don't buy excessive amounts of pantry items because other people need them, as well. You will be able to get more food when you need it.

4. **Freeze lean cuts of meat and fish so they stay good longer.** Your healthy diet may normally feature meat, which tends to have a short shelf-life. Fortunately, it's easy to make your meat last longer by popping it in the freezer when you come home from the store. When you're ready to use your meat, defrost it overnight in your refrigerator.^[21]
 1. You can buy pre-frozen meat for a convenient option or you can freeze fresh meat.
5. **Get eggs or egg whites as a protein option.** Eggs provide protein and other nutrients. Plus, they're easy to prepare. Typically, eggs will last about 3 weeks in your refrigerator, but check the date on the package. Similarly, check the date on your egg whites.^[22]
 1. Unopened, egg whites typically last for awhile. Once you open them, it's best to use them within about a week.
6. **Choose whole-grain bread products.** Whole grain products are healthier and more nutritious than refined breads. Opt for whole grains if you're going to eat bread, tortillas, bagels, and other grain-based products.^[23]

Tip: You can freeze extra bread for later use if you like.

7. **Purchase fresh and shelf-stable milk.** If you enjoy dairy, consider buying extra fresh milk if the dates are far in advance. Otherwise, opt for shelf-stable containers of milk or dry milk.^[24]
 1. You might be able to buy cartons of milk for up to 2 weeks at a time, depending on when they expire. However, once milk is open, you typically need to use it within about a week.
8. **Limit how much pre-packaged foods and treats you purchase.** It's understandable that you'd want your favorite snack foods and treats right now. However, buying large quantities of these foods is a recipe for unhealthy eating. If you want snacks, buy just enough for you enjoy an occasional treat.^[25]
 1. For instance, you might buy a dark chocolate bar to satisfy your sweet tooth or you could buy 1 pint of ice cream.

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