



Meal Planning During COVID-19

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Panic-buying food across the nation has led to supermarkets being unable to keep up with the high demand of some pantry essentials and frozen food items, such as flour, pasta, rice, and frozen veggies.

The following tips can help you manage nutritious meal planning and routine, even with a limited ingredient list and budget.

Meal Planning

1. Shop Early in the Day

Larger supermarkets, such as Coles and Woolies, tend to stock up their shelves at night, meaning you are more likely to find items earlier in the day. This also means that you will be exposed to fewer people compared to busier times in the evening.

2. Plan your Meals Ahead of Time

It can help making a grocery shopping list prior to visiting your local supermarket. This ensures you have a plan of action and a clear idea of what you will be buying as well as minimising the amount of time you spend in the supermarket. It will decrease the chance of being overwhelmed and over-purchasing.

3. Bulk Cook and Find Freezable Recipes

Look for recipes that are freezer-friendly and can be prepared in bulk. For example, curries, stews, salsas, and bolognese sauces are healthy options that can be packed full of vegetables and are freezer friendly.

4. Find Alternatives

Frozen Vegetables

Choose fresh vegetables that last longer, such as potato, sweet potato, pumpkin, carrot, green beans, cabbage, and cauliflower. Canned vegetables are also good options; try canned tomato, corn, beetroot, or legumes. They provide similar nutritional value as frozen vegetables.

Regular Pasta

Try alternatives to standard pasta, such as pulse pasta. It is higher in protein and fibre, and lower in carbohydrate content.

Rice

Now might be a good time for you to experiment with a range of grains, such as quinoa, couscous, pulse pasta, or bread. These grains have an increased variety of wholegrains.

Sauces

Try herbs and spices, such as ginger, garlic, turmeric, cinnamon, or cayenne pepper. Pre-made sauces generally have added sugar, sodium, and preservatives to ensure a long shelf life. Using herbs and spices as an alternative can help boost the flavour of your meal without the added salt and sugar.

Grocery Shopping on a Budget

1. Buy generic brands
2. Look for products on special or on mark down
3. Buy in bulk and freeze products to extend their shelf life, e.g., bread
4. Choose frozen or canned products over fresh
5. Shopping at ALDI or your local fruit and veg markets might work out to be cheaper
6. Cheaper protein options include tinned tuna/salmon, canned legumes, or eggs.

Support is Available

Acacia EAP offers sessions with our team of high quality, accredited practising dietitians. These sessions can be helpful for nutritional tips, weight management, and individualised dieting plans. For individual dietary advice, call 1300 364 273 to book an appointment with one of our accredited practising dietitians today.

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