



Meal Planning During COVID-19

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 with a limited ingredient list and budget.

Meal Planning

1. Shop early in the day if possible.

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 and make 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 rather than feeling overwhelmed and over-purchasing food items when you walk into a supermarket.

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 can be made to be healthy, packed full of vegetables and are freezer friendly.

4. Find alternatives.

| Common Food Products | Alternatives |
|----------------------|---|
| Regular wheat pasta | Pulse pasta. Benefits: higher in protein and fibre. Lower in carbohydrate content. |
| Frozen vegetables | Choose fresh vegetables that last longer: <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Potato, sweet potato, pumpkin, carrot, green beans, cabbage, cauliflower.▪ Canned vegetables – tomato, asparagus, corn, beetroot, legumes. Benefits: similar nutritional value as frozen vegetables. |



| | |
|--------|--|
| Rice | Now might be a good time for you to experiment with a range of grains such as quinoa, couscous, pulse pasta or bread. Benefits: increased variety of wholegrains. |
| Sauces | Herbs and spices such as ginger, garlic, turmeric, cinnamon, cayenne pepper etc. Benefits: 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. Bulk in bulk and freeze products to extend their shelf life e.g. bread.
4. Choose frozen or canned products over fresh, where possible.
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, individualised dieting plans and more.

For individual dietary advice, please call 1300 364 273 to book an appointment with one of our accredited practising dietitians today.

**Acacia EAP offers support 24/7/365
1300 364 273**