

Maintaining Good Nutrition for Individuals with Cystic Fibrosis during COVID-19

Diet and immunity to COVID-19

Eating a well-balanced diet based on the five key food groups (fruit, vegetables, dairy, protein and carbohydrates) is important to ensure the normal functioning of your immune system. There is no one individual nutrient, food or supplement that is going to “boost” your immune system beyond normal levels. Good hygiene practice remains the best means of avoiding infection (British Dietetic Association).

Food safety – delivery/take out

FSANZ Australia (Food Standards Authority for Australia and New Zealand) has made the following statement “Transmission through food is unlikely and so far there is no evidence that people have become infected by swallowing the virus in or on food or drink”. The European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) have made a similar statement.

Food safety – home

It is important that you wash your hands before touching food and if you have symptoms of a respiratory illness you should avoid preparing food for other people or sharing food with them.

Maintaining good nutrition

It is important to eat and drink regularly even if your appetite is poor. Children should stay in a routine and follow a school day schedule for meals and snacks. This means waking up at their usual time and starting the day with breakfast.

A quick word on vitamin D

Vitamin D is essential for bone health. The average Australian gets 90% of the vitamin D they need from exposure to the sun and the remaining amount from various food sources. Our food supply in Australia is very low in vitamin D and even if you are following a well-balanced diet you are highly unlikely to obtain enough vitamin D through food alone. While you are isolating at home you should try and spend some time outdoors each day (30 minutes during winter months, preferably at midday and with your arms exposed). If this is not possible you may need to start a vitamin D supplement, your CF Dietitian can help you with this.

Getting the most out of your supermarket shop

Start by taking an inventory of what you already have. Make a list before you head to the shops – try and plan out a week of meals before you go. Select longer lasting and shelf stable foods from the major food groups to supplement fresh products (Dietitians Association of Australia)

Fruit: frozen fruits (like berries and mango that can be used in smoothies), dried fruit (such as apple rings, apricots and sultanas) and canned fruit/two fruits.

Vegetables: Choose fresh vegetables that last longer such as onions, potatoes, pumpkin and carrots. Supplement fresh vegetables with frozen vegetables (corn and peas) or canned vegetables (e.g. tinned tomatoes, corn, beetroot).

Protein: Canned fish (e.g. salmon, tuna or sardines). Beans and lentils (canned or dried). Nuts and seeds (including nut butters). Long life milk (UHT or powdered milk).

How to limit contact when shopping

(please continue to check websites for updated information)

Coles

Coles have temporarily suspended their click and collect and online shopping options but will soon be launching COPS (Coles Online Priority Service). Details to follow.

Coles Community Shopping hour from 7-8am on Monday, Wednesday and Friday is a dedicated shopping hour for vulnerable individuals. If you show your child's healthcare card then you can shop at this time.

Woolworths

Woolworths have temporarily suspended their pickup service.

Woolworths are offering home delivery for vulnerable people through a priority assistance service (this includes those with compromised immunity). You will need to fill out a form online and wait for approval (48hrs) – you should not require a letter from clinic.

Woolworths has a community shopping hour but unlike Coles, individuals with CF do not meet the criteria to shop at this time.

There are many businesses that have started to offer home delivery options, often free of charge over a certain spend. These include butchers, bakeries (who are also selling flour/butter/eggs) and fruit and vegetable shops.

Help with food affordability

We know that many people will be experiencing financial difficulties at this time. If you are unable to afford sufficient food for your family then please call Foodbank NSW on (02) 9756 3099 and they can direct you to your closest charity partner or alternatively use the following tool to find places of assistance by postcode <https://askizzy.org.au/food/personalise>. Please also inform Holly our social worker on 9382 1021 as there may be some assistance we can offer.

Regards

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This information is correct as of the 3rd April 2020