



# medisys

## PREVENTIVE HEALTH

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### SPECIAL ISSUE: NAVIGATING OUR NEW REALITY

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THE ULTIMATE FREEZER GUIDE (HOW TO MAKE YOUR GROCERY SHOP LAST)

HOW TO MAINTAIN PHYSICAL DISTANCING DURING GOOD WEATHER

YOUR COVID-19 CHEAT SHEET

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# COVID-19 MYTHS BUSTED

As Canadians continue to navigate news from a variety of sources and learn more about the COVID-19 health threat, it can be difficult to separate fact from fiction.



Our medical experts bust six common myths surrounding COVID-19, the novel coronavirus:

## 1. It's just like getting the flu.

While it is true that most people who become infected with COVID-19 will experience mild to moderate flu-like symptoms, its disease profile is more serious than that of the flu. Simply put, the novel coronavirus is more likely to lead to serious respiratory symptoms and complications than the seasonal flu. It is too early to determine an accurate mortality rate for COVID-19, but so far the World Health Organization states that the number of reported deaths divided by the reported cases is between 3% and 4%. While this number may be skewed due to many unreported infections, we know COVID-19 is at least 10 times more deadly than the seasonal flu.

## 2. I have minor symptoms that feel like a typical cold, so I don't really need to self-isolate.

COVID-19 has symptoms that can mirror a regular cold or flu, and people can transmit COVID-19 even if they have very minor symptoms. With that in mind, self-isolation is critical when you have a cold or any COVID-like symptoms, in order to protect your loved ones and your community.

## 3. COVID-19 is dangerous for seniors and people with underlying conditions, but not for kids or healthy adults.

This unfortunate myth is giving many adults the false impression that they will not get very sick even if they contract the virus. While most young, healthy individuals who become infected will have mild or moderate symptoms, no one is protected from the potential serious health risks.

It is true that seniors, those with underlying conditions, and those with more exposure to the virus (healthcare workers, for example) are more vulnerable – and physical distancing efforts by all of us play a vital role in protecting them. Reporting symptoms, self-isolating when necessary, being vigilant about hand hygiene, and practicing diligent physical distancing – no matter what – is crucial in influencing the trajectory of this pandemic.

## 4. You need to be directly exposed to an infected person in order to catch COVID-19.

The virus is spread by droplet or by contact. By droplet means close, face-to-face exposure, or being within two meters of an infected person for several minutes. Contact means touching contaminated surfaces, then touching our mucous membranes

– and COVID-19 can last several days on surfaces, depending on the material. This is why it is so important to be diligent about physical distancing, hand-washing, and regularly sanitizing high-traffic surfaces such as countertops, doorknobs, elevator buttons, light switches, etc.

## 5. Taking a hot bath, drinking hot fluids and rinsing your nose and mouth can help prevent contracting COVID-19.

Unfortunately, there is no evidence that any of these measures will prevent you from contracting COVID-19. Regularly rinsing the nose with a saline solution may speed up recovery from the common cold, but it has not been shown to prevent or treat respiratory infections like COVID-19.

### The best defences against the novel coronavirus are:

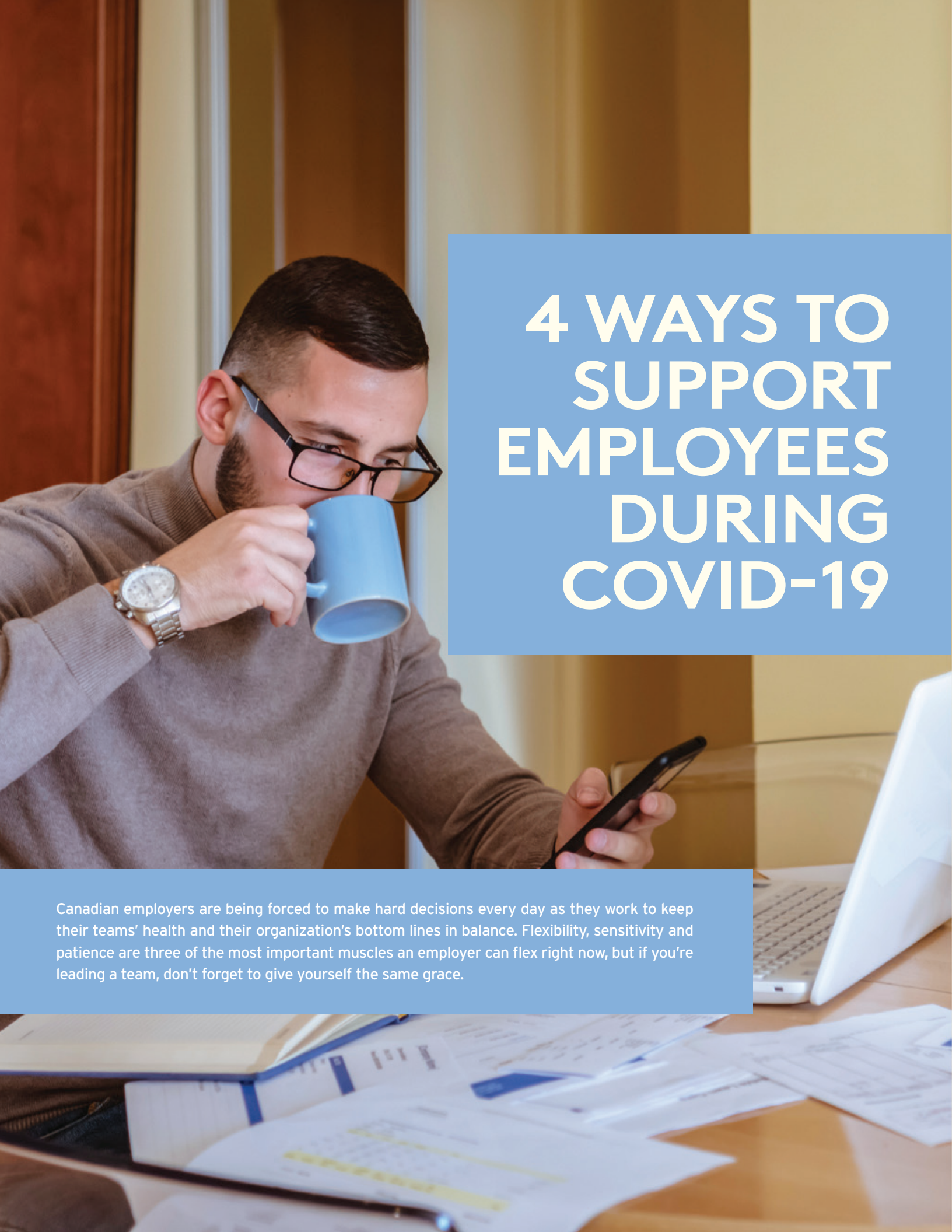
- Physical distancing overall, and self-isolation when appropriate
- Hand washing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, or using alcohol-based hand sanitizer (containing at least 60% alcohol)
- Avoiding touching your face
- Taking care of your health through social connection (virtually), good nutrition, exercise at home, adequate sleep, and calling your healthcare professional if you have concerns.

## 6. A vaccine will be ready soon and will end the pandemic.

The development of a vaccine is underway, but there are many lengthy trials and steps required before it can be commercially viable. We are likely still 12 to 18 months away from a vaccine; in the meantime, the only way to positively influence the outbreak is to slow down its spread. Each of us has the power to help accomplish this by practicing physical distancing and healthy hygiene. We are in this together, for ourselves, our loved ones, our communities, and for all Canadians.

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COVID-19 RESOURCES IN YOUR INBOX.



# 4 WAYS TO SUPPORT EMPLOYEES DURING COVID-19

Canadian employers are being forced to make hard decisions every day as they work to keep their teams' health and their organization's bottom lines in balance. Flexibility, sensitivity and patience are three of the most important muscles an employer can flex right now, but if you're leading a team, don't forget to give yourself the same grace.

When you feel overwhelmed, remembering these four key ways to support your employees will go a long way.

## 1) Empower employees to work remotely

Public health experts, physicians and government officials agree that organizations should encourage and enable employees to work from home during this pandemic to promote social distancing and reduce the spread of COVID-19. Help your employees transition to working from home by encouraging them to:

- set up a designated workspace
- establish a new routine that includes regular communication with their team members
- schedule breaks to reset and get outside
- create a distinct wind-down to the work day in order to protect mental health and prioritize self-care during this stressful time

## 2) Centralize information

Since changes are happening daily – sometimes hourly – set up a centralized place for employees to get company updates about COVID-19, including work from home guidelines, new or revised policies for absences and sick days, etc. This could be a hub on your company's intranet, a gated landing page on your website, a phone number where updates can be broadcast, or even a closed Facebook group or WhatsApp thread, depending on the comfort levels of your team members.

When sharing updates about COVID-19 in general, remember to focus on facts published by reputable organizations as opposed to news websites that may editorialize information or make its own predictions.

**[Click here](#)** to access our free COVID-19 resources for yourself and for your team.

## 3) Establish strict health & safety measures

In addition to increasing sanitization of all commonly-used office areas including elevators, door handles, kitchens and washrooms, employers must implore any employees who must come into work to follow a new set of best practices. At minimum, all employees must be given the tools and information required to:

- practice physical distancing
- clean and disinfect their work areas regularly
- practice regular and effective hand washing
- practice effective coughing and sneezing etiquette (into the elbow)
- monitor their symptoms regularly

## 4) Prioritize communication

If your organization was relatively siloed before the outbreak, now is the time to encourage and exemplify regular communication. A sense of community and a culture that promotes openness is vital to prevent loneliness and protect mental health during social distancing.

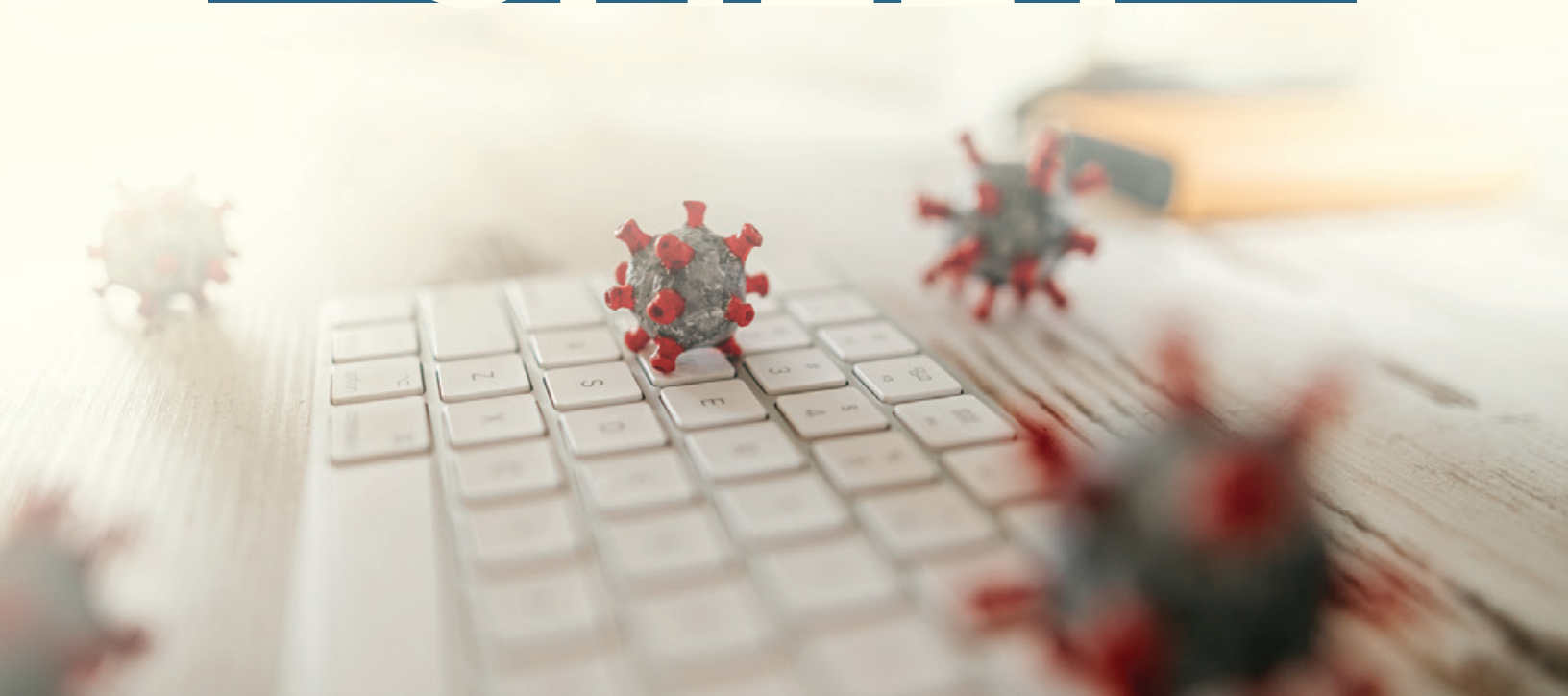
Schedule video meetings in lieu of relying solely on emails and calls, and work to cultivate your online community through group chats. If there was ever a time to allow memes and social sharing, this is it!

As a leader, another great practice to establish is “one minute of kindness” for each employee each day if possible, which means sending a note of thanks or taking a moment to ask each person about their families, etc.

Our free happiness challenge ([here](#)) and mental health challenge ([here](#)) are great ways to engage organizations and promote mental health awareness. The pages to subscribe can be shared with employees so those who want to join can do so easily.



# YOUR COVID-19 CHEAT SHEET



From “R0” to “contact tracing”, this pandemic has introduced a new lexicon of words, leaving many a little confused.

See below for our cheat sheet of 15 COVID-19 related terms you’re likely seeing daily (many of which are used incorrectly around the virtual water cooler that is social media).

**1) Asymptomatic:** No sign of illness or disease. Regarding COVID-19, experts say those who are asymptomatic could still be contagious during the incubation period.

**2) Community Spread:** When the source of a COVID-19 infection is unknown, which means it was not due to recent travel or exposure to someone with a confirmed or suspected case.

**3) Contact Tracing:** Public Health and medical experts work to identify people who may have interacted with someone who was/is ill with COVID-19.

**4) Flattening the Curve:** Referencing the curve that depicts the growth or spread of novel coronavirus cases, and the collective action taken by a community to slow or “flatten” that growth.

**5) Immunocompromised:** People with weakened immune systems due to chronic health conditions who are more vulnerable to contracting COVID-19.

**6) Incubation Period:** The time it takes for symptoms to appear after an individual is infected. The COVID-19 incubation period is 2-14 days. During incubation, infected individuals can spread the virus before exhibiting symptoms.

**7) Isolate/Isolation/Self-Isolate:** An individual who is confirmed positive for a contagious illness or disease separates him or herself from other healthy people by staying confined to a separate room and bathroom. This helps prevent the spread of the disease until the danger of passing it on has passed.

**8) Lockdown:** Governments restricting the movement of people within their governed areas and closing all nonessential businesses. If rules are breached authorities can impose fines.

**9) Physical Distancing (aka. Social Distancing):** Measures taken to increase the physical distance between people to slow the spread of a disease. Examples include working from home, cancelling gatherings, connecting with others virtually in lieu of in person, and maintaining a minimum of two metres of distance between people outside of your home.

**10) Public Health Emergency:** A declaration made by the provincial health officer under the Public Health Act, allowing him or her to issue orders verbally that are immediately enforceable without the consent of the legislature.

**11) Quarantine/Self-Quarantine:** Separating and restricting the movement of individuals who seem healthy, but who were potentially exposed to a virus, in order to determine if they become sick - typically for 14 days. This can be self- or government-imposed.

**12) R0:** Also known as R-naught, this is an epidemiological metric used to depict how contagious a virus is. For example, “for one infected individual, two others can be infected.”

**13) SARS-CoV-2:** The technical name for the novel (new) coronavirus. This stands for severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2. Being infected by SARS-CoV-2 causes the COVID-19 disease.

**14) Self-Monitor:** Monitoring yourself for 14 days to see if you develop symptoms related to COVID-19. Physical distancing must be practiced while self-monitoring.

**15) Shelter-in-Place:** Staying home except for to buy essentials like groceries and medicine, while minimizing contact with those outside of your immediate household.

ONLY TRUST INFORMATION FROM RELIABLE SOURCES LIKE GOVERNMENT WEBSITES OR MEDISYS WEBSITES FOR PANDEMIC INFORMATION. WE UPDATE OUR CONTENT ON A REGULAR BASIS TO PROVIDE USEFUL RESOURCES TO THRIVE. SUBSCRIBE TO OUR NEWSLETTER [HERE!](#)

Referencing:

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# THE ULTIMATE FREEZER GUIDE

**(How to make your  
grocery shop last)**

By Andrea Stokes, Registered Dietitian,  
Medisys Health Group

The frozen food aisles of many grocery stores are sparse as retailers struggle to keep up with demand. Fresh items may be more readily available, but they just don't last as long. Or can they?





You may be surprised to learn how many fresh foods can be frozen to prolong their life, take advantage of sales, and reduce your trips to the grocery store. Check out our Ultimate Freezer Guide chart below!

Food	How to freeze	How to use
Tomatoes	Drizzle with oil and Italian herbs, then roast in the oven at 400 for 25 mins. Blend and freeze in freezer-safe containers.	Sauce for pasta, fish or chicken.
Salad greens	Transfer to a freezer bag and squeeze out excess air.	In smoothies or to wilt into soups, curries and sauces.
Avocado	Peel, sprinkle with lemon/lime juice and mash, then freeze in a freezer-safe container. Or chop into chunks, freeze on a cookie sheet, then transfer to a freezer bag.	Spread on toast or sandwiches, use chunks in smoothies or thaw and toss in salads.
Citrus fruit	Zest and juice the fruit. Freeze the juice in an ice cube tray. Freeze the zest in a single layer, then transfer to a freezer bag.	Thaw as needed for dressings, sauces or to drizzle on veggies, fish or chicken.
Broccoli, cauliflower, carrots, sweet potato, green beans, okra and peas	Blanch by cooking in boiling water for about two minutes, then transfer to an ice bath. This preserves flavour, texture and colour.	Toss in any cooked dish (or smoothie if you're brave!)
Mushrooms, squash, leafy greens and beets	Cook then freeze on a cookie sheet before transferring to a freezer-safe container or bag.	Reheat and enjoy or add to your favourite dish.
Berries, apples, pears, plums, peaches, pineapple, banana	Peel and chop (except for berries) and freeze on a baking sheet. Transfer to a freezer bag.	Thaw and spoon onto oatmeal and yogurt, use in baking (from frozen) or blend into smoothies.
Hard cheese and butter	Wrap tightly in plastic wrap to avoid freezer burn.	Thaw and use as you would fresh.
Eggs	Crack, whisk and pour into large ice cube trays or small containers.	Thaw and use as you would fresh.
Milk and yogurt	Portion into freezer-safe containers and leave a little room at the top.	Thaw and stir well (separation is normal) and use as you would fresh.
Meat, fish, tempeh and tofu	Pre-cooked or raw, these can be portioned and frozen in freezer bags without much change to taste or texture.	Thaw and use as you would fresh. Note that tofu may change colour slightly; this is not a problem.
Tomato paste	Freeze leftovers in an ice cube tray.	Toss into soups, curries, stews and sauces.
Fresh herbs	Freeze on a baking sheet in a single layer, then transfer to a freezer bag.	Toss into your favourite dishes.

Of course, freezing pre-made meals can be a major time (and stress) saver for busy families, too. Quiches, chilis, soups, slow cooker meats, casseroles, quesadillas, burritos, pre-cooked grains and pre-cooked, chopped chicken are all excellent freezer meals, or components of meals, to cook and keep on hand in your freezer.

Be sure to check out the freezer-friendly recipes in our next newsletter, and contact [info@definitionsonline.com](mailto:info@definitionsonline.com) for more recipe ideas.

# HOW TO MAINTAIN PHYSICAL DISTANCING DURING GOOD WEATHER



Spring is here and the sun has been making an appearance more and more - a refreshing change when we're all confined to our homes. It's not surprising that the nice weather brings runners, cyclists, and families out, but in this COVID-19 world we need to remain aware of the need for physical distancing and the risks associated with not following those guidelines.

Here are our experts' recommendations for enjoying nice weather safely:

- If you're running or biking, maintain a distance of several metres from people you pass or come across. Because you're exercising and moving faster, there is actually an increased risk of droplets and it becomes easier to break the traditional precautions.

- If you are taking the kids out to a park or trail, look for local, smaller ones that may not be as busy as the bigger, well-known ones. And, as tempting as they are, keep the kids away from playgrounds.

- As a general rule, stay away from people as much as possible - go for solo walks and runs, and if you're walking your dog make sure you keep a safe distance from other dog walkers, including at dog parks.

We're with you - we all want to enjoy the sun and get some fresh air, but we also want to make sure you're all staying healthy and helping keep your community safe.

Medisys is always publishing downloadable content, articles, webinars (and much more) to help support our community and clients.

# WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!



If there are specific COVID-19-related topics you want to learn about, whether through a webinar or articles, please send an email to [marketing@medisys.ca](mailto:marketing@medisys.ca). 





DURING THIS COVID-19 PANDEMIC, MEDICAL EXPERTS AND GOVERNMENTS ARE URGING CITIZENS TO STAY HOME AND PRACTICE PHYSICAL DISTANCING.



Give your employees and their families access to great healthcare and mental health support from the comfort and security of their home, at a time when access to medical support is especially important.

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