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SPECIAL ISSUE: #STAYHOME AND FLOURISH

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4 CROWD-PLEASING FREEZER RECIPES

Freezer food often brings thoughts of frozen peas and your mother's tried and true casserole. But whether you're looking to use what's in your freezer or batch-cook and freeze some dishes for the weeks to come, we're confident that these meals will be in regular rotation – even once this pandemic is behind us.

Chicken Avocado Burgers

Ingredients

- 1 lb. ground chicken (fresh or thawed from frozen)
- 1 large ripe avocado, cut into chunks (or frozen then thawed chunks)
- 1/2 cup panko crumbs or other breadcrumbs
- 1 chopped clove of garlic
- salt and pepper to taste

Method

- Toss the chunks of avocado, bread crumbs and garlic together.
- Blend mixture into ground chicken, being careful not to mush the avocado too much.
- Form into 6-8 patties and grill until done (temperature: 165).
- If you used all fresh (not frozen) ingredients, feel free to freeze these patties for later use!

Recipe adapted from: <http://laughingspatula.com/chicken-avocado-burgers/>



One-Pan Lemon Garlic Butter Shrimp and Asparagus

Ingredients

For asparagus:

- 1 pound fresh or frozen (and thawed then drained) asparagus, ends trimmed
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/8 teaspoon pepper

For shrimp:

- 1 1/2 pounds fresh or frozen (and thawed then drained) medium uncooked peeled shrimp
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 2-3 garlic cloves, minced (or garlic powder to taste)
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon paprika
- 1/8 teaspoon pepper
- 1/8-1/4 teaspoon red pepper flakes (optional)
- 3 tablespoons chopped fresh or frozen parsley
- 1 1/2 tablespoons fresh or frozen (and thawed) lemon juice, or more to taste
- 2 tablespoons fresh or frozen (and thawed) butter, cubed

Method

- Preheat oven to 400 degrees F.
- Line a large baking pan with foil and lightly spray with cooking spray. Add asparagus and drizzle with 1 tablespoon olive oil. Add 1 minced garlic clove, 1/4 teaspoon salt and 1/8 teaspoon pepper. Toss until evenly coated then line asparagus in a single layer. Roast for 4-6 minutes depending on thickness.
- Meanwhile, remove tails from shrimp.
- Remove pan from oven and push asparagus to one side of the pan (keep in a single layer). Add shrimp and drizzle with 1 tablespoon olive oil. Add 2-3 minced garlic cloves (or more to taste), 1/2 teaspoon salt, 1/4 teaspoon paprika, 1/8 teaspoon pepper, 1/8-1/4 teaspoon red chili flakes and fresh parsley.
- Toss until evenly coated then line shrimp in a single layer.
- Top asparagus with 1 tablespoon cubed butter, evenly spaced.
- Top shrimp with 1 tablespoon of cubed butter, evenly spaced.
- Roast for 6 minutes or just until shrimp is opaque.
- Remove pan from oven and drizzle with lemon juice. Season with additional salt and pepper to taste. Serve with brown rice or quinoa (bonus points if you already have a cooked grain like this in your freezer!).



Creamy White Chicken Chili

Ingredients

- 1 pound lb boneless skinless chicken breasts (fresh or frozen then thawed), cut into 1/2-inch cubes
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 1 1/2 teaspoons garlic powder
- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil
- 2 cans (15.5 ounces each) great northern beans, rinsed and drained
- 1 can (14.5 ounces) low-sodium chicken broth
- 2 cans (4 ounces each) chopped green chilies, drained
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- 1 teaspoon dried oregano
- 1/2 teaspoon pepper
- 1/4 teaspoon cayenne pepper
- 1 cup (8 ounces) sour cream (or swap for 2% plain Greek yogurt)
- 1/2 cup milk

Method

- In a saucepan, sauté chicken, onion and garlic powder in oil until chicken is no longer pink.
- Add beans, broth, chilies and seasonings; bring to a boil.
- Reduce heat; simmer, uncovered, for 30 minutes.
- Remove from the heat; stir in sour cream and milk.
- Makes about 7 servings.

If you used all fresh (not frozen) ingredients, feel free to freeze in containers for later use!

Avocado Black Bean Quesadillas

Ingredients

- 1/2 medium onion, sliced
- 2 bell peppers, sliced
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 can black beans
- 1 tablespoon taco seasoning
- 4 medium soft whole wheat flour tortillas
- 2 avocados peeled, halved, seeded and sliced (or frozen then thawed avocado)
- 1/4 cup minced cilantro (optional)
- 1 lime cut in half
- 1 cup cheddar or mozzarella cheese
- oil or cooking spray for grilling
- salt and pepper, to taste

Method

- In a medium pan over medium-high heat, sauté onion and bell pepper in 1 tablespoon oil for 2-3 minutes or until tender. Transfer to a plate and set aside.
- Add the black beans (including juices) and taco seasoning to the pan. Cook until heated through and liquid has absorbed (about 5 minutes). Move beans to a bowl.

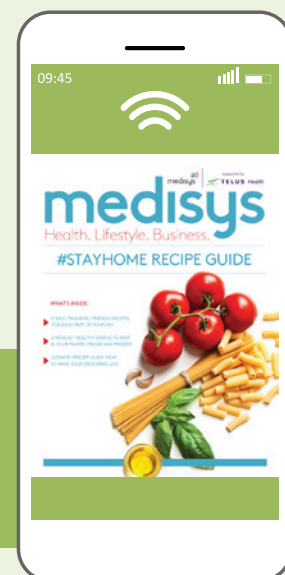
Optional: mash black beans with a fork while cooking if you prefer a refried-bean texture.

- Rinse and wipe down pan and return to heat. Drizzle with a light layer of oil or spray with cooking spray.
- In a small bowl, lightly mash the avocados with a fork. Stir in cilantro (if using) and juice of 1/2 lime, season with salt and pepper to taste.
- Spread a quarter of mashed avocado onto half of a tortilla. Top with bean mixture, peppers and onions, and 1/2 cup of cheese. Fold the tortilla closed over the veggies.
- Repeat until all tortillas are filled and all fillings are used.
- Cook on medium-high heat for 2-3 minutes per side or until the outside is crispy and cheese has fully melted.
- Serve with your favourite salsa or and plain Greek yogurt for dipping.

If you used all fresh (not frozen) ingredients, feel free to freeze in containers, in layers separated with parchment paper, for later use!

Recipe adapted from: <https://gimmedelicious.com/2017/01/03/avocado-veggie-quesadillas/>

The Medisys #StayHome Recipe Guide is launching on Thursday! [Click here](#) to get on our mailing list and receive 13 pandemic-friendly recipes designed by our dietitians, along with grocery shopping and food storage tips.





SELF-COMPASSION IS VITAL: HERE'S HOW TO PRACTICE IT

By Alissa Vieth, Registered Dietitian, Medisys Health Group

Our current reality can be overwhelming and trigger a variety of emotions including fear, anxiety and grief as we all shift our lives in dramatic ways.

Our regular meal patterns, exercise schedules, social outings and in-person work connections are largely no longer possible, and that shift alone can destabilize our mental and physical health.

During times of transition, disruption and unease, cultivating more self-compassion is key. In fact, it can radically transform your relationship with difficulty and help you feel more capable of dealing with challenges.

Here is your no-pressure invitation to try four new skills and behaviours during this time of many unknowns:

1. Accept that this is our situation – for right now.

You may not be fully at peace with the current situation, but acceptance is a powerful tool that can cultivate strength and resilience during hard circumstances and times of change.

2. Establish a new routine.

Whether you're working from home or simply spending more time there, experiment with creating new rituals. Some examples include having a shower, brushing your teeth and getting dressed for the day upon waking, enjoying a slow and relaxed sit-down breakfast, going for a walk midday or after the work day, or getting some joyful movement in with an online

class. Try to tune into what feels best for you and choose some new habits or rituals to build into your days.

3. Let go of perfection and be kind.

It is perfectly acceptable to cut yourself slack right now. This can be a very powerful “unlearning” opportunity to shift away from our perfectionist tendencies. You may feel, for instance, that you are struggling to stick to “normal” eating patterns, and that’s OK. Instead of feeling guilty about how you are choosing to fuel your body, try exploring how you can build in a bit of daily structure when it comes to meals and snacks. It can also help to try to think about food as nourishment, with the goal of being gentle and kind to yourself.

4. Practice gratitude.

Most of us are fortunate to have a roof over our head, internet service to connect with the outside world and food in our fridges – our basic needs are being met. The purpose of practicing gratitude is to find the mundane little things that can help promote a better outlook on life and change potentially negative thought patterns. This can mentally and physically help us feel more at ease and relaxed. A great practice to try is to write down a few things you are grateful for when you wake up and/or before you go to bed.

During this unprecedented time, we must remember to continually adjust our habits in order to best support our bodies and minds. Try to have deep compassion for your own process – you are your own expert and can choose what you want and need to do to support your wellbeing each day.

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 [click here](#) to fill out a quick survey.



3 WAYS TO CURB ANXIETY AT HOME

There's no way around it – for the time being, we're going to be spending more time in and around our homes than we probably ever have before. Whether you're single, an empty nester or at home with kids, being cooped up in your space can lead to feelings of anxiousness and even despair.

Here are three ways to mitigate that stir-crazy sensation and the emotional fallout that often comes with it:

1) Declutter.

With schools and extracurricular activities cancelled, normal routines completely disrupted, and coronavirus news tidbits seeping into the household – there's a lot of chaos going on in most kids' lives and minds right now. One way to combat this, suggested veteran school counsellor and educator Kim John Payne in a recent interview with Goop, is by creating a sense of calm and order in our children's surroundings.

Payne suggests starting in the playroom and kids' bedrooms by minimizing toy and book collections and clearing off surfaces to create open space and less decision fatigue. You don't have to throw the decluttered things away, but at least box them up for the time being. You can revisit them in a few months to determine their long-term fate.

If yours is a child-free home, the same logic applies – physical clutter often exacerbates mental or emotional clutter, and we all have plenty of the latter during these unusual times. Spend some time decluttering the pantry, your bedside table, your closet or the bathroom cupboards, and notice how the sense of calm you feel from looking at these spaces trickles into other parts of your day.

2) Create rhythms – not rigid schedules.

Creating a new routine is an important part of thriving while working and staying at home, but this is not the time for rigidity. Whether you're creating a schedule for yourself or for a child, it's important to leave room for flexibility because right now, our physical and emotional needs vary each day – as will our bandwidth for completing complicated tasks.

Parents, retirees, employers, employees and self-employed individuals alike must remember that social connection, rest, good nutrition and self-care are essential during this time. For example, a daily rhythm like getting outside, if only for a short walk or warm drink on the balcony or front steps, is realistic and beneficial; scheduling a rain-or-shine 5K daily run because "you can" might not be. Getting work done might be essential each day; working eight straight hours is likely not realistic or healthy for anyone right now.

3) Embrace boredom.

Most of us – children and grownups – are experiencing some level of calendar shock these days. It could be cancelled dance lessons, birthday parties, dinners with friends or professional conferences, but our collective busyness levels have plummeted. The empty space left behind might leave you feeling relieved, a little melancholy, terrified or downright bored – but let's do our best to embrace that. Children and adults often birth their most creative ideas during periods of boredom. But even if creativity doesn't strike, take the time to do exactly what feels right. Stretch, read, watch a show, take a bath. This period of enforced stillness likely won't happen again.

If you are feeling overwhelmed by anxiety, it's important to seek medical attention. Please contact your primary care provider or speak with a medical professional using a virtual healthcare platform if one is available to you.

Q & A WITH DR. LE, FAMILY PHYSICIAN AT MEDISYS



Dr. Hoa Phong Le is one of Medisys' Montreal-based family physicians who – like many Canadians – has transitioned to working from home during the COVID-19 pandemic. He is currently seeing patients virtually on the Akira by TELUS Health virtual healthcare platform, so we caught up with him on how his patients are adapting to the change, and to hear his advice for flourishing in this unusual time. Fun fact: Dr. Le is also a lawyer!

1). Q: You recently transitioned to seeing patients virtually through Akira. How has this experience been?

The most amazing part is the patient feedback! People are so happy and satisfied with the advice and care received through this service. They tell me it's incredibly convenient, especially considering that visiting their usual clinics is nearly impossible these days.

2). Q: How have your patients responded to the transition to virtual care?

The ones who consult for the first time are amazed by how easy it is to connect with a nurse or physician through video and chat.

I expect that we will in the near future integrate this as a part of regular care. It's a great way to reach out easily for first advice, and when the situation requires, a formal visit in physical clinics will always play an important role.

3. Q: How has your personal life changed in the past few weeks?

We get to be with the kids a lot! My two youngest ones who are not yet in school are super excited to have their older siblings at home full time!

4). Q: What is one challenge you've faced during this pandemic?

Personally, what I find the hardest is to see friends and citizens struggling with their jobs and hard built businesses. But preventive sanitary measures are essential and I keep good confidence in our capacities to bounce back.

5). Q: What is one silver lining you've experienced during this pandemic?

Solidarity. The vast majority of our society is stepping up together. We are not witnessing social distancing. We are seeing a collective effort, a need for social bonds and collective response to the crisis. I prefer the words physical distancing to qualify the sanitary measure.

6). Q: Can you share one piece of advice for Canadians who are quarantined, self-isolating or social distancing?

Try to exercise at home, even if it's just 10 minutes 3 times per week.

If you are teleworking from home, try to adjust your screens at a good height and move around in your "office" during the day.

[Click here](#) to learn more about virtual care services



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.

[LEARN MORE ABOUT OUR VIRTUAL CARE SERVICES](#)

