



# medisys

## PREVENTIVE HEALTH

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**SPECIAL ISSUE: HOW TO THRIVE AND  
STAY HEALTHY DURING COVID-19**

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ADVICE FOR PARENTS

MENTAL HEALTH: 5 TIPS FOR COPING

PANDEMIC MEAL PLANNING: 4 WHOLESOME  
(AND SURPRISINGLY DELICIOUS) PANTRY RECIPES

PANDEMIC GROCERY SHOPPING 101

HOW TO WORK EFFECTIVELY FROM HOME

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# COVID-19 ADVICE FOR PARENTS

With schools, daycares and community centres across Canada closed during the COVID-19 pandemic, parents nationwide are scrambling. From figuring out working from home and childcare arrangements, to talking to kids about what's going on, to keeping everyone occupied – parenting during this unprecedented time is full of questions.

**We hope these tips from our experts will provide some answers:**





## 1) Playdates, playgrounds and play groups – what are safe forms of Physical Distancing for kids?

The Canadian government has implored all Canadians to stay home as much as possible in order to protect our health and the health of those around us, and also to ensure that our healthcare systems can focus on those who most need help. Ultimately, the best course of action is to avoid group gatherings whenever possible.

Getting outdoors whenever possible is a must for everyone's mental and physical health, and spending time in well-ventilated areas definitely decreases the risk of transmission. Remember that **the virus can live on surfaces like playground equipment, so always wash or sanitize hands before, during and after going to a playground.**

## 2) I need to work from home, but I don't want my kids watching TV all day. What can I do?

**An overwhelming number of individuals and organizations have stepped up to offer free resources to support families stuck at home during this time.**

Scholastic Canada is offering free online courses including interactive stories, lessons and activities for kids in pre-K up to grade six and beyond, and a number of accredited homeschooling platforms like Other Goose have waived their fees so that parents can set up learning plans from home. Treasured kids' authors like Oliver Jeffers have set up live daily story time on social media platforms, too. **If you can, spend a few minutes each evening planning some remote learning activities – it's an investment with a big payoff.**

## 3) How do I talk to my kids about COVID-19? They have so many questions.

With a drastic change in routine and snippets they have likely heard about COVID-19, it's understandable for kids to be feeling anxious right now. Do your best to save adult conversations for times when kids are not around, and avoid keeping the news on all day, but **children have a right to ask questions and know an age-appropriate amount about what's going on.**

**Try asking an open-ended question like "what have you heard about the new sickness that is going around?"** to gauge what they know or what incorrect information they may have heard. Then **respond calmly by telling them about the**

**proactive measures your family is taking**, like avoiding large gatherings in order to protect each other. Take the opportunity to teach good hygiene like hand washing and sneezing or coughing into the elbow, which helps gives kids a sense of control.

Remember that **it's normal for kids to seek more attachment and be more demanding of their parents and caretakers during times of stress.** Establishing a daily routine while at home and letting your kids ask questions will help all of you cope during this unprecedented time.

## 4) Some attractions and kids play places seem to be open in my area. Is it safe to visit those?

Unfortunately not. These places pose health risks right now because they are indoors and attract large groups. The same logic applies to classes like swimming or dance lessons, and birthday parties with many kids.

**Note that in some provinces, all indoor and outdoor gatherings are now prohibited, or allowed, but limited to a small number of people.**

## 5) Is it safe for my kids' grandparents or older family members to help with childcare?

This is a personal decision, but we know that those over the age of 65 are more vulnerable to the coronavirus. As such, many families are choosing to keep their children away from older family members at this time. Of course, you must self-isolate if you've travelled outside of Canada in the last 14 days, and/or if you have any symptoms associated with COVID-19, but **there is also some evidence that we can be contagious during the incubation period of the virus (this is the time between when we catch the virus and when we start to feel sick)**, according to the Centers for Disease Control.

**Since kids have been relatively protected from COVID-19 so far, they may still be able to spread the virus to grandparents or older family members even if they are not showing symptoms.**

**Note that some provinces recommend to stay home as much as possible and not let anyone in from outside, in order to limit community spread.**

# MENTAL HEALTH & COVID-19:



## 5 TIPS FOR COPING

The COVID-19 outbreak and pandemic may cause feelings of stress, anxiety and fear in anyone. Whether you're a front-line healthcare worker, experiencing symptoms or simply practicing physical distancing, people from all walks of life are susceptible to mental health issues during this time. It's important to remember that coping in healthy ways will help strengthen you, your loved ones and your community.



## HERE ARE FIVE TIPS FOR PRIORITIZING MENTAL HEALTH DURING THIS UNEASY TIME:

1

### UNDERSTAND THAT EVERYONE REACTS DIFFERENTLY TO STRESSFUL SITUATIONS LIKE THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC.



The way in which you react to this pandemic — and the intensity of emotions you feel as a result — has a lot to do with your background, your state of mental and physical health, your life experience and your community. You don't have to be sick or quarantined to be "allowed" to feel scared, worried or sad, so give yourself permission to experience your emotions and be conscious of coping in healthy ways.

People with preexisting mental health conditions should continue their treatment and alert their healthcare professional(s) of any changes during this time.

2

### STAY CONNECTED.



In this time of physical distancing, remember that the mandate is only to physically distance ourselves from others. Staying socially connected is more important than ever. Luckily, technology allows us to maintain regular communication with family, friends, neighbours and even community organizations.

Be sure to make time to talk with friends during phone or video calls regularly — and prioritize staying in touch with older family members, friends and neighbours who may be feeling particularly isolated. This is also the ideal time to leverage positive social media use; since you can't get to the library, gym or community centre you love, check to see if your favourite organizations are hosting live video events or if they've set up chat groups online.



5

### SEEK HELP WHEN YOU NEED IT.



3

### CONTROL YOUR NEWS INTAKE.



Constantly reading, listening to and/or watching the news can aggravate anxiety and fear surrounding COVID-19. It's important to stay informed, but rather than getting ongoing updates throughout the day, dedicate a limited amount of time for research, and only visit reputable news sources for information, including:

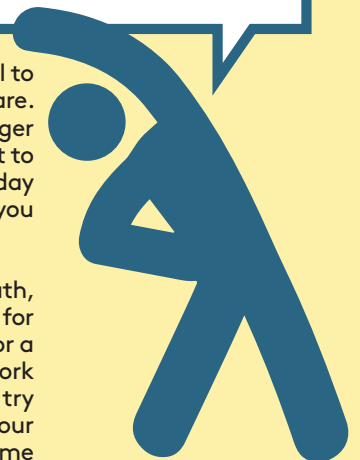
- Government of Canada
- Government of Canada – Frequently Asked Questions
- Centers for Diseases Control and Prevention
- Government of Canada – Recommendations for travelers
- World Health Organization

4

### PRACTICE MINDFULNESS AND SELF-CARE.

During times of increased stress, it's crucial to prioritize sleep, good nutrition and self-care. While your to-do list has likely gotten longer as a result of this pandemic, it is important to set aside time — even 15 minutes — every day to do something you love, and that brings you into the present moment.

Meditating, stretching, taking a bath, cooking, journaling, reading a book for pleasure, playing a board game or going for a walk are some ideas. If you're juggling work and childcare like many Canadians, try scheduling a childcare swap with your partner so that you can each make time for self-care.



If you or someone you care about is feeling overwhelmed by anxiety, sadness or thoughts of self harm, contact 911. Virtual healthcare platforms can also provide on-demand support from medical professionals 24/7.





# PANDEMIC MEAL PLANNING: 4 WHOLESOME (AND SURPRISINGLY DELICIOUS) PANTRY RECIPES

Are you short on fresh produce? Unable to grocery shop? Trying to make use of the pantry and freezer staples you've stocked up on? No matter your pandemic situation, cooking during the COVID-19 pandemic can be a challenge – but you need not eat frozen pizzas on repeat!

Because you've likely got too much on your plate right now to peruse cookbooks, our team of Registered Dietitians

have rounded up four creative recipes that are wholesome, delicious, kid friendly, and made with items you probably have on hand. The best part? These will come together nicely even if you're missing a spice, a veggie, or two or three.

Try adding one to your weekly meal lineup (but don't worry about throwing a frozen pizza in the oven now and then, either).





## 1) Moroccan-Spiced Chickpea and Rice Bowl

### Ingredients

#### For the moroccan-spiced chickpeas:

- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1/4 cup chopped onion
- 1 clove garlic, minced, or 1/4 tsp garlic powder
- 1 tablespoon each - chili powder and cumin
- 1 teaspoon each - turmeric and garam masala
- 1/2 teaspoon sea salt
- Dash of each - cinnamon and cayenne (to taste)
- 2 14-ounce cans chickpeas
- 2 14-ounce cans diced tomatoes (undrained)

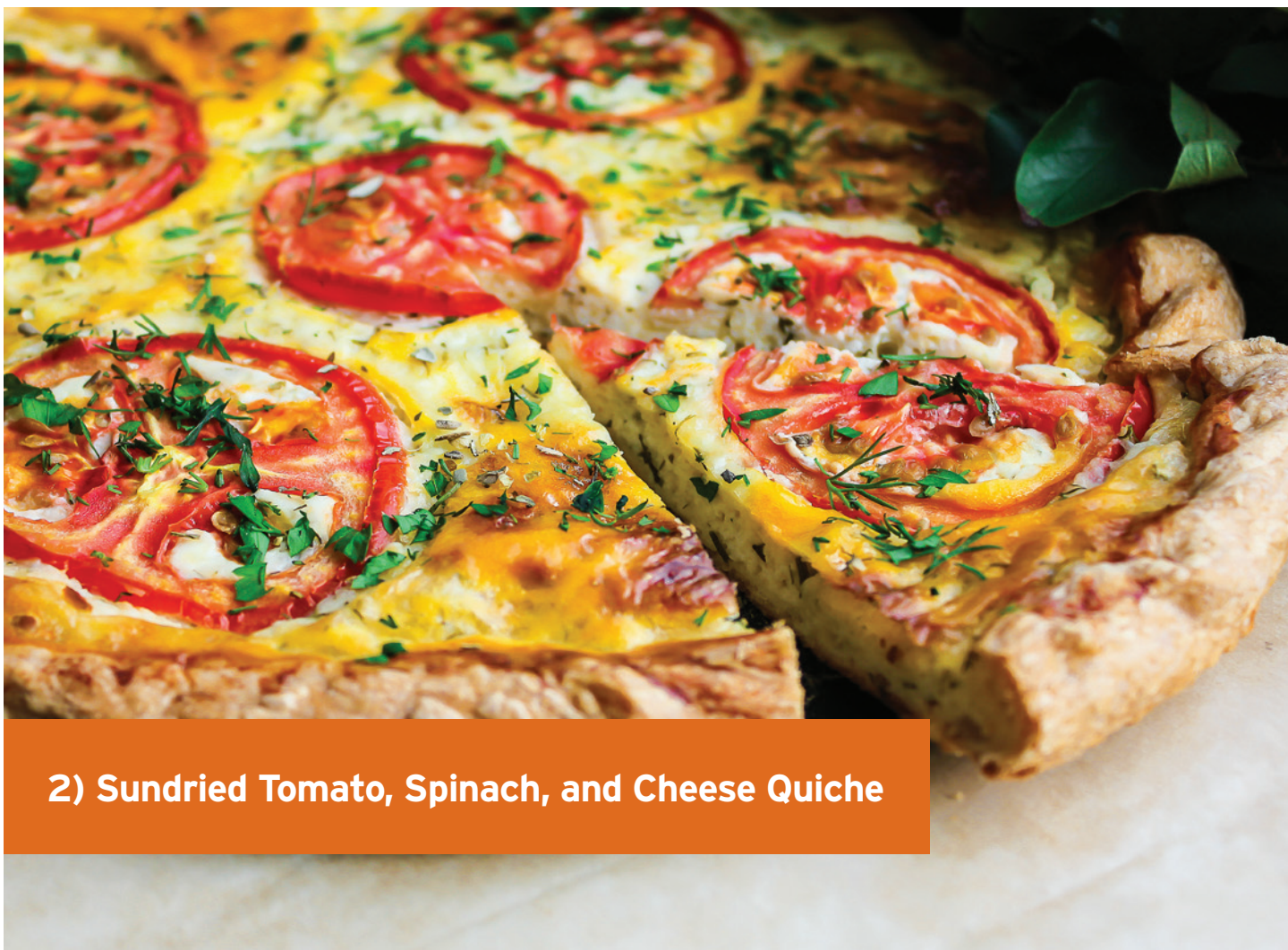
#### For assembly:

- 1 medium cucumber or zucchini diced, or 1/2 cup of canned or thawed frozen peas
- 3-4 cups brown rice or couscous, cooked

- Chopped mint, parsley, cilantro (optional)
- Plain yogurt (enough for a large dollop on each serving, optional)
- Lemon juice, for drizzling (optional)
- Toasted pita wedges or other bread (optional)

### Method

- Heat the olive oil in a large skillet over medium heat.
- Add the onion and sauté until soft.
- Add the garlic, spices, salt, and chickpeas and stir until very fragrant.
- Add the tomatoes and simmer for 20 minutes while you prep the other ingredients.
- Chop the cucumber or zucchini, or thaw the peas.
- Cook the rice or couscous, and mince the herbs.
- Arrange bowls with desired amounts of all ingredients.



## 2) Sundried Tomato, Spinach, and Cheese Quiche

### Ingredients

- 1 frozen pie shell (or make a homemade crust, if ingredients and time allow)
- 1/2 teaspoon olive oil
- 1 teaspoon minced garlic, or 1/4 teaspoon garlic powder
- 3 packed cups fresh spinach or kale, or 10 ounces of frozen spinach or kale, thawed and squeezed
- 4-5 large eggs
- 1 cup milk
- 1/2 cup sun-dried tomatoes, drained and chopped, or halved cherry tomatoes, or diced tomatoes
- 4 ounces goat, feta or cheddar cheese crumbled or grated
- salt and pepper, to taste
- Stir in the tomatoes, cheese, and spinach to the egg mixture.
- Sprinkle mixture with salt and pepper.
- Remove the prepared pie crust from the oven and pour in the egg mixture.
- If desired, sprinkle the top lightly with more salt and pepper.
- Bake the quiche until golden brown on top, until the centre is no longer jiggly (about 45-55 minutes).
- Allow to cool for 5 minutes before slicing and serving.

**Tip: Baked quiche freezes very well for up to 2 months. To freeze, allow quiche to cool completely, then wrap in foil or plastic wrap and place in a large freezer bag and lay flat to freeze.**

- To reheat, thaw overnight and bake at 350°F (177°C) for about 25 minutes.

### Method

- Prepare pie crust as per package directions.
- While the pie crust is baking, whisk the eggs and milk together until combined.





### 3) Jazzed Up Tuna Melts

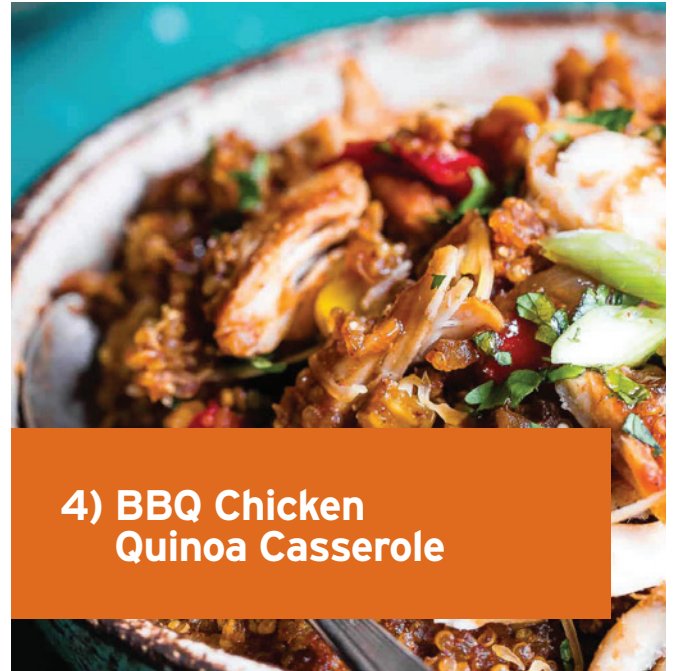
#### Ingredients

- 3 cans (5 ounces each) solid white tuna packed in water, drained
- 1/3 cup mayonnaise, plus more for spreading
- 1/4 cup finely chopped red onion (optional)
- 4 teaspoons capers or chopped pickles, rinsed and drained (optional)
- 1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice
- 1 teaspoon ground pepper
- 1/2 teaspoon dried oregano, crumbled between your fingers
- 4 slices of bread or 4 buns, lightly toasted
- 8 thin slices tomato (optional)
- 4 slices of provolone, cheddar, Monterey jack, or mozzarella cheese

#### Method

- Pre-heat broiler, with oven rack in highest position.
- In a medium bowl, combine tuna, mayonnaise, onion, capers/pickles, lemon juice, salt, pepper, and oregano and stir until thoroughly combined.
- Arrange bread or buns on a baking sheet and spread a little mayonnaise or spicy mustard on each slice.
- Divide tuna salad evenly among slices, then top each with 2 slices tomato and 1 slice of cheese.
- Broil until cheese is golden brown and bubbling, 3 to 4 minutes.

Recipe adapted from: <https://www.marthastewart.com/314389/emerils-kicked-up-tuna-melts?czone=food%252F lunch-recipes%252Fsandwich-recipes&center=856055&gallery=853635&slide=260194&crlt.pId=camp.6nAKxde.JjFY>



### 4) BBQ Chicken Quinoa Casserole

#### Ingredients

- 3 cups cooked quinoa (3 cups cooked quinoa is made from 1 cup uncooked quinoa, cooked with 2 cups chicken or vegetables stock, or water)
- 2 cups of shredded cheese, divided (any type)
- 2 cups shredded cooked chicken
- 1 (15-ounce) can black beans, rinsed and drained
- 1 cup whole-kernel corn, canned or thawed from frozen
- 1 1/2 cups BBQ sauce, plus extra for drizzling on top
- optional garnishes: chopped cilantro, finely-chopped red or green onions, diced avocado, sour cream, etc.

#### Method

- Preheat oven to 375°F.
- In a large baking dish, stir together quinoa, 1 1/2 cups cheese, chicken, black beans, corn and BBQ sauce until combined.
- Sprinkle the remaining 1/2 cup cheese evenly on top.
- Bake for 15-20 minutes, or until the cheese is melted and the casserole is warmed through.
- Remove from the oven, and drizzle the top of the casserole with a little extra BBQ sauce, and top with your desired (optional) garnishes.

Recipe adapted from: <https://www.gimmesomeoven.com/bbq-chicken-quinoa-casserole-recipe/>



# PANDEMIC GROCERY SHOPPING 101

By Lily Elizabeth Lam and Rachel Malcangi, Registered Dietitians, Medisys Montreal

In a matter of weeks or even days, we've all had to drastically adjust our lives. While these changes look different for everyone, there's one thing that we've all had to figure out: grocery shopping! Whether confined at home or covering emergency and essential services, how we buy and what we buy must be adapted during a pandemic. Keep reading for expert advice for preparing for and executing your shopping.





## PREPARE YOUR LIST

Preparing your list will cover your bases, avoid waste, reduce the time you spend in the store and cut down on future trips. This is not the time to wing it! To make an effective list:

- Inventory your fridge, freezer and pantry and jot down meals that you can prepare based on what you already have; add any missing items.
- Increase quantities of the essentials you normally buy, within reason, in case you need to remain in quarantine for two weeks.
- Add non-perishables like dried or canned beans, pasta and other grains and frozen produce. Don't forget about oils, vinegars and dried herbs or spices.
- Being confined and living at a slower pace can be a great opportunity to try a new recipe. (Hint: the Homemade Energy Bites at the end of this article are a great place to start!) This will help you use your time positively and equip you with something new in your database when you return to normal life. Add the items you need for any new recipes!
- If you're still going to work, list items you need for lunches and snacks; this is the time to pack your own lunch.

## PLAN YOUR TRIP

- Schedule your shopping trip outside of peak hours, and note that many grocery stores have changed their hours during the pandemic; check online or by phoning ahead.
- Eat a protein-rich snack before you go to avoid impulse-buying and therefore spending more time in the store than you need to.
- Bring hand sanitizer and disinfecting wipes with you. Wipe your cart or basket handles and clean your hands before and after shopping.

## SHOP SMART

- Continue practicing Physical Distancing at the store and don't touch your face while shopping.
- Consider buying local products to support the economy.
- Choose produce that lasts longer like pears, apples, clementines, cabbage, carrots, beets, squash and cauliflower.
- Opt for frozen avocado chunks instead of fresh ones – they defrost nicely and can be thrown into smoothies or salads, crushed up into guacamole or as a sandwich spread.
- Remember to check expiry dates on dairy products and consider plant-based milks, which are usually shelf-stable if unopened so you can actually keep them in your pantry.
- Opt for long-lasting protein sources like frozen edamame

beans, bean-based pasta, firm or soft tofu, natural nut butters, plain nuts and seeds, eggs, frozen fish, poultry and lean red meat that can be frozen, and canned fish like tuna or sardines. Avoid breaded frozen products as well as processed meats like bacon, salami and other cold cuts.

When you get home, wash your hands with soap and water for 20 seconds before putting your goods away.



## HOMEMADE ENERGY BITES RECIPE:

### Ingredients

- 1 cup (dry) oatmeal
- 1/2 cup peanut butter, almond butter, or any other natural nut or seed butter
- 1/2 cup ground flax seed
- 1/2 cup chocolate chips (optional)
- 1/2 cup honey
- 1/4 cup milk (or milk alternative) if not using honey
- 1 tablespoon chia seeds
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract

### Directions

1. Combine all ingredients in mixing bowl and mix thoroughly.
2. Cover and let chill in the refrigerator for half an hour.
3. Roll into 1-inch balls.
4. Store in air-tight container in the refrigerator for up to a week (or freezer for longer storage).

**Makes about 20-25 bites.**

## NUTRITIONAL INFORMATION:

20 per recipe. Per Bite:	10 per recipe. Per Bite:
• 85 kcals	• 171 kcals
• 5.5 g fat	• 11 g fat
• 2.5 g protein	• 5 g protein
• 16 g carbohydrate	• 32 g carbohydrate
• 2.4 g fibre	• 4.8 g fibre
• 0.3 g sugar	• 0.6 g sugar



# HOW TO WORK EFFECTIVELY FROM HOME

Andrea Stokes, Registered Dietitian, Medisys Health Group



Those who are new to working from home may be finding it difficult to concentrate, stay motivated, or simply get into a good groove outside of the office. There are certainly unique challenges to #WFH, but these strategies will help establish a new work “culture” and help you thrive at home – professionally and personally.

## Set Up a Proper Workspace

Take advantage of a quiet area of your house to set up your workstation. It doesn't have to be fancy – a spare guest room, a rarely-used basement, or even a free corner of your bedroom will do the trick. If your only option is to set up at a dining room or kitchen table, clear the space of clutter and do your best to set up your desk items similar to how you'd have them at the office. Adding a nice candle, diffuser or fresh flower to your new space is also a great mood booster.

Most importantly, prioritize ergonomics by avoiding sitting on the couch or bed while working. Try to maintain these basic principles as well:

- Ideally, find a table/desk that allows you to sit with your feet flat on the floor and your elbows at about 90 degrees (the desk height should hit at just below your elbows while in a seated position). Use a pillow or folded blanket or towel under your seat to prop yourself up if needed.
- If your feet can't touch the floor, use an ergonomic footrest, a low stool, or even some large books to bridge the gap.
- If your chair lacks lumbar support, consider using a pillow, or rolling a small blanket or towel to place at your lower back.
- Your computer screen should be positioned at an arm's length distance with the top of the screen at – or slightly below – eye level. If you have a separate keyboard, you can prop your laptop up on a box or stacked books to achieve this proper height.
- Even with a perfect set-up (which will be unlikely at home), stand up and move around or stretch at least once per hour.

## Focus on Routine

- **Set regular working hours.** This may continue to be your usual 9-5, or you may take the opportunity to be more flexible. Whatever you choose to do, commit to specific work times in order to create boundaries for yourself.
- **Maintain a daily schedule.** This may be a prime opportunity to start your day with exercise (like a yoga video or a walk outside), dive into work for a few hours, have lunch with your family, work for a few hours again and then take the time to cook dinner. Do your best to plan out your day and stick to a schedule so that the hours don't slip away from you with little to show for them.
- **Plan meals and snacks ahead of time.** If snacking and preparing meals throughout your working hours is taking up too much time (or is too much of a distraction), consider prepping and portioning them in advance as if you're taking them to work. This can be especially helpful for those of us who tend to munch mindlessly when we have unlimited access to food.
- **Try dressing the part.** If you find yourself feeling a little lazy, staying in PJs all day could be the culprit. Showering and dressing “for work” in the morning as part of your new daily routine can create a major mindset shift. (Although feel free to take advantage of the opportunity to be more comfortable!) The key is to still “get ready” for work, so that you can feel like you've transitioned into work mode.
- **Ease into work mode.** It can be hard to switch your brain to focus mode, especially if you have noisy kids at home, or if you've just finished scrolling through all the latest COVID-19 news updates. As you begin work for the day and when you start back at it after breaks, make the first task or two relatively low-effort – like answering a few emails, completing data entry, or chatting with a colleague about plans for the day.

## Make the Most of It

Consider the many advantages that working from home can provide. No time spent commuting or stuck in traffic, access to your own fridge and cupboard for healthy meals and snacks, the opportunity to throw in a load of laundry or unpack the dishwasher on your mini-breaks, and maybe even the chance to spend more time with your kids, spouse, or roommates.

Remember to focus on the positives, maintain a routine to keep distractions at bay, and reach out for support if you find yourself struggling.

**For more information, please contact**  
**[info@definitionsonline.com](mailto:info@definitionsonline.com)**





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 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

