

# Nutrition and foods to fuel your body and mind in times of crisis



TIP SHEET



38%

of adults say they have overeaten or eaten unhealthy foods in the past month because of stress<sup>1</sup>

As the COVID-19 crisis is forcing many employees and students to stay home, it can be challenging for home-bound individuals to eat well. Research shows that people tend to seek high-calorie, high-fat foods during times of stress or boredom. Employers can support their employees and families through these periods by promoting healthy eating in the home.

## 1. Resist the temptation to eat out

This may not be an option as many restaurants, cafes, bars, etc. are closed or only offer reduced levels of service. But if people want to order take-out just to get out of the workplace or home, have them go for a healthy walk instead. Save on empty calories and increase those steps!

## 2. Binge Healthy Habits, not food

It's common to eat when confronted with stress or overwhelming emotions. If people feel overwhelmed and have the urge to eat the stress away, they can re-direct that emotion into something else such as meditating, going for a walk, or talking to someone about how they're feeling.

## 3. Eat clean food

The renewed emphasis on handwashing also applies to food. Rinse fruits and vegetables before eating them, and to use a clean brush to scrub away any dirt. Also remove the outermost leaves of leafy produce such as lettuce or cabbage.

## 4. Prepare meals with the family

A fun way to spend time with loved ones is to bond over the course of making a healthy dinner (or breakfast or lunch). Watch cooking shows or read cooking blogs for inspirations to try new meals, and for more variety each family member can alternate who cooks, cleans, preps, etc.

## 5. Have fun while eating healthy

Create Bingo cards with various fruits, vegetables, and grains in each square, and check the boxes as they are eaten. Start a healthy habit challenge around snacking on fruits instead of sweets. There are also lots of fun healthy eating games and activities to keep families entertained while eating well.

## 6. Plan your meals

Write down meals in advance, which will provide a map of the day's food journey and will also help steer people from sugary temptation. Set alarms on phones for meal and snack reminders. It's easy to make a meal or a nutrition planner on a list or spreadsheet, and you can also use tools on websites such as Zipongo and MyFitnessPal.

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<sup>1</sup>American Psychological Association