

Food for households self-isolating in response to COVID-19

This information is based on the idea of people having a typical amount of foods in the pantry at the start of the self-isolation along with an emergency food store for disasters. Some supermarkets will continue with online shopping. Some people will have friends and family who are willing to buy additional foods during the self-isolation period. This advice is based on neither option being available.

Stocktake food supply

- Make a complete list of household food at the start of self-isolation. Record both what and how much of each item you have.

How much food per day?

Each person will need to have a minimum daily intake of:

- 6 servings of grain foods
- 2 servings of fruit
- 3 servings of vegetables
- 2 servings of milk and dairy products
- 2 servings of legumes, nuts or seed OR 1 serving of seafood, poultry (chicken) or red meat.

At the end of this document is a table of serving sizes for each of these food groups.

Some people will need more servings than this. This is likely if they are growing, very active or unwell. Some people will be either surprised or concerned at the proportionately large amount of grain foods. When there is a restricted food supply, high fibre grain based foods can be a useful way to fill people up. The emergency food store has ingredients for scones, muffins and pancakes, to replace bread which is likely to run out early in self-isolation.

Planning food for people who are ill

At the start of self-isolation, plan to put aside stores, so there are foods suitable for ill people. For most people developing COVID-19 they will have mild symptoms. They are likely to have a fever and poor appetite, and food is important during this period. If by the last few days of self-isolation no one in the household is ill, then you can start eating this set aside food.

When unwell, people will need plenty of fluids and to be offered food little and often.

DO NOT STARVE A FEVER

Drink plenty of fluids

Encourage an unwell person to drink plenty of fluids. Fluid can include juices, cordials, soup, milky drinks, juice, tea or coffee. Alcohol is **not** suitable.

There is no "correct" amount of fluids. Someone who is unwell with a fever should still need to pass urine regularly. With too little fluid there is increased risk of complications that would require hospitalisation.

Eat little and often

Even if the person is not hungry encourage them to eat. Offer small amounts of food regularly. Foods that are bland and easy to digest may be more acceptable. Having options like soups, scrambled eggs, white toast, rice, tinned fruit and smoothies are all good choices. If you have ice-cream or custard, these may be more acceptable than warm foods.

Food for people who are well

The main issues for people who remain well during self-isolation are:

- Equitable sharing of food.
- Boredom
- Usual food choices being unavailable

Equitable food sharing

Some households are not used to sharing meals. Doing a stocktake and agreeing on a menu/meal plan can help people feel that the food is being shared equitably whilst in isolation. The menu should include meals and snacks along with the times of these to help provide routine. By eating together it will demonstrate that everyone is eating the same.

Managing boredom

Routine helps manage boredom. It breaks up the day into manageable chunks of time. With some of the foods that you will be eating based on a limited food supply, you may be able to use cooking as a way of doing something new and interesting.

Food unavailability

Some people choose to follow special diets. Some people need to follow these kinds of diets for medical reasons. Unless it is medically necessary, people within a household may need to accept that being fed is more important than following a special diet. Eating together is one way to encourage everyone to eat the food that is available. Many people with diabetes will be concerned that the self-isolation will make their blood glucose worse. Planning ways of being active for a minimum of 10 minutes after each meal will help reduce your blood glucose. If you have concerns about your diabetes management, arrange a phone call with your diabetes team to discuss whether you need to change your medications.

What is a serving?

Vegetables (3+)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- ½ C cooked vegetables- ½ C salad vegetables- 1 fist sized potato, kumara, taro or yam serving.
Fruit (2+)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- 1 medium sized apple, pear or orange.- ½ large banana- 80g of other ready to eat fresh fruit (grapes, berries, melons)- ½ C tinned or stewed fruit- 1 TBSP dried fruit
Grain foods (6+)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- 2 wheat biscuits- 1 medium slice of bread or similar weight of other breads e.g. ¼ large wrap- ¼ C oats- ½ - 1 C cereal- ½ C raw rice (1C cooked)- ½ C raw pasta (1C cooked)
Milk and dairy	250ml milk 150g yogurt 40g cheese 35g skimmed milk powder (2 TBSP)
Legumes	¾ C cooked or tinned beans or legumes
Nuts	30g nuts, seeds or nut butters
Eggs	1 egg
Fish	1 small tin (95g) or 100g cooked or 130g raw
Chicken	250g on the bone or 150g off the bone (raw)
Red meat	150g raw (without bones) or 100g cooked

Emergency Food List

This is a basic list. It has been built on the assumption that storage and cooking facilities will be limited (i.e. in a physical disaster). It is assumed there is sufficient water in storage or available to be treated so it is suitable for cooking.

It is designed for 4 adults over a 21 day period. Individuals who are still growing, unwell or active may need to have more than this. Some people will need less. In this list there are enough foods to have your basic nutrition met. Variety will be limited. Where people are either reluctant or unable to eat certain foods, this list will need modification.

In an emergency, you may not be able to provide food that meets everyone's wants. Where possible eat together as a household so there is encouragement to eat what is provided.

Emergency food store management

Most households should retain a stock of food as listed below. There are two ways of managing the stock to ensure it remains in date.

- Items are held as main pantry stock. Make a list of any used items and replace them each week when you shop
- Emergency food stashes may work better. Food should be checked monthly. Any food approaching the expiry date should be taken into the main pantry for use, and replaced.

Best before vs use by date

A use by date indicate the food as reached a point where it may be "off" or unsafe to eat. It is important to understand that some foods may be safe to eat after this date. However they should only be eaten if thoroughly heated.

Best before dates are used to indicate the food may be tainted with packaging or be stale by that date. They are generally safe to eat for some time after this date.

Emergency Food list

ITEM	AMOUNT	NOTES
RICE	5 kg	Fast cook rice may be useful
PASTA	5 kg	Spaghetti and vermicelli cook fastest.
BEANS	10 Cans	390-410g size. Ideally in spring water but brine or tomato sauce OK options
MEAT	5 Cans	390-410g size – tinned corned beef or equivalent
FISH	5 Cans	390-410g size – tinned in oil are more energy dense if people you are feeding are very active
FRUIT	20 Cans	390-410g Select a variety
VEGETABLES	20 Cans	390-410g Select a variety
MILK POWDER	5 kg	110g milk powder makes 1L when mixed with water
CEREAL	4 Boxes	Large boxes of cereal, choose a high fibre option to ensure sufficient fibre
OATS	5 kg	
FLOUR	6 kg	3 kg of high grade white flour and 3kg of wholemeal flour is ideal
BAKING POWDER	200g	Get double action baking powder if possible. If you cannot get baking powder have 100g bicarbonate and 100g of cream of tartar but these must be kept dry until use.
OIL	2L	A liquid oil such as canola or rice bran is best
SUGAR	2 kg	This may seem excessive but will be used in cooking and for hot drinks
TEA	250 bags	Hot drinks are good for between meals and if people need warming. If people don't drink these, consider getting soup mixes, milo or drinking chocolate.
COFFEE	500 g	
MARGARINE	1 kg	Select one that is at least 70% fat. This is likely to keep better than butter.
SALT	200 g	This is for flavour if needed. It may also be useful if someone has a stomach bug to make an oral rehydration solution ⁱ
PEANUT BUTTER	600 g	This stores well and is a good source of energy.
CRACKERS/CABIN BREAD	6 packs	250g size
EGGS	48 Eggs	If your eggs are fresh they can be stored in a cool cupboard, turning them every couple of days will improve shelf life. If your eggs are a bit older, you may want to coat them in Vaseline. Store them in a tray covered with cling film or other plastic. Vaseline eggs can last up to 3 months – do the float test before use.
ONIONS	5	Store in cool dark place. Remove any plastic wrapping. Wrapping individually in paper can prolong shelf life.
CARROTS	5	
POTATOES	10	If you are unable to get these, then replace with an additional 20 cans of vegetables and 2kg rice or pasta.

ⁱ ORS can be made by taking 1L boiled water and adding 1/2tsp salt and 6tsp sugar