

THE  
**HEALTHY  
REVOLUTION**  
IS HERE

# *Wellness Express*



## Tips for staying healthy and preventing the spread of COVID-19:

- Proper and regular hand washing -- it seems like common sense, and I'm sure you're hearing this over and over, but please wash your hands.
- Cough and sneeze into your elbow -- since coronavirus spreads through respiratory droplets, coughing and sneezing into the nook of your elbow can minimize the droplets released into the air.
- Don't touch your face -- avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth, even if your hands are clean.
- Prioritize rest and nourishment -- stress suppresses the immune system. Remain calm, follow the steps above, get good sleep, and be sure to EAT!

## Tips for Eating Healthy During a Coronavirus Quarantine

### 1. Gather your favorite fruits and veggies.

Fruits and vegetables get your immune system in fighting shape. Chop and store fresh vegetables now or buy pre-cut packages to save prep time. It's a good idea to buy frozen fruits and vegetables too. They're nutritious, and you won't have to worry about them spoiling.

Add spinach and berries (or other fruit) to smoothies.

Top oatmeal or Greek yogurt with fresh or defrosted berries.

Toss colorful veggies together to make salad, stir-fry, wraps and omelets.

Avoid frozen foods packed in sauces.

### 2. Power up with protein.

Keep up your strength and fight fatigue by eating lean protein. It's not just for dinner. Add protein to breakfast and snacks too.

Add frozen shrimp to stir-fry or zucchini noodles.

Grill fresh fish, meat, skinless chicken or veggie burgers.

Heat up frozen grilled chicken.

Use guacamole in a pouch or tub on eggs, toast, salad or wraps. (Fresh avocados spoil quickly.)

Avoid fatty cuts of meat, battered fish or chicken and sugary nut butters.

### 3. Stock up on soup and beans.

You can make a pot of soothing soup or beans then freeze in several smaller containers. Or try healthy, convenient boxed and canned options. Avoid packaged soups or beans loaded with sodium.



## 4. Pack in the probiotics.

Probiotics are “good bacteria” that offer several health benefits. Probiotics occur naturally in fermented foods, such as:

### Greek yogurt:

Look for plain, low fat (2%).  
Top with fruit or add to smoothies.

### Sauerkraut:

Look for refrigerated kinds or make your own.  
Avoid canned versions; the process kills probiotics.  
Avoid added sugar.

### Kombucha:

Look for unpasteurized, preservative-free brands.  
Look for “live active cultures” on the label.  
Choose flavors lower in calories and sugar.

## 5. Be ready for comfort food cravings.

What do you reach for when you're sick, tired or bored? It's likely something starchy, creamy, crunchy or sweet — and not very healthy. Know your favorite go-tos and be ready with healthier swaps:

Need a crunch? Switch saltines with Triscuit Thin Crisps. Mary's Gone Crackers and Van's Crackers are great gluten-free choices.

Sweet tooth? Soothe it with a protein-rich ice cream alternative or dark chocolate (70% or higher). Even with healthy swaps remember to practice portion control.

## 6. Stay hydrated.

Fluids help thin mucus, flush out germs, and keep your digestion and immune system running smoothly. Aim for half of your body weight in ounces of fluid. That's 80 ounces of liquid for a 160-pound person. It's easier than you might think to reach your goal: Broths, smoothies and Greek yogurt count toward your fluid total. Squeeze a little lemon, lime or orange into your water or tea for flavor and vitamin C.

*Source: Oshner.org*

## Is There a Stress Management Diet?

**Stress:** We all have it, and how we handle it can make all the difference. Stress management can be a powerful tool for wellness, there are many strategies, and one of them includes what you eat.

### Stress-Busting Foods: How They Work

Foods can help tame stress in several ways. Comfort foods, like a bowl of warm oatmeal, boost levels of serotonin, a calming brain chemical. Other foods can cut levels of cortisol and adrenaline, stress hormones that take a toll on the body over time. A healthy diet can help counter the impact of stress by shoring up the immune system and lowering blood pressure.

**Complex Carbs:** All carbs prompt the brain to make more serotonin. For a steady supply of this feel-good chemical, it's best to eat complex carbs, which take longer to digest. Good choices include whole-grain breads, pastas, and breakfast cereals, including old-fashioned oatmeal. Complex carbs can also help you feel balanced by stabilizing blood sugar levels.

**Simple Carbs:** Dietitians usually recommend steering clear of simple carbs, which include sweets and soda. But in a pinch, these foods can hit the spot. They're digested quickly, leading to a spike in serotonin. Still, it doesn't last long, and simple carbs can also spike blood sugar, there are better options. So don't make these a stress-relieving habit; you should limit them.

**Oranges:** They make the list for their wealth of vitamin C. Studies suggest this vitamin can curb levels of stress hormones while strengthening the immune system. In one study of people with high blood pressure, blood pressure and levels of cortisol (a stress hormone) returned to normal more quickly when people took vitamin C before a stressful task.

**Spinach:** One cup of spinach helps you stock back up on magnesium. Don't like spinach? Other green, leafy vegetables are good magnesium sources. Or try some cooked soybeans or a fillet of salmon, also high in magnesium.

**Fatty Fish:** Omega-3 fatty acids, found in fish such as salmon and tuna, can prevent surges in stress hormones and may help protect against heart disease, depression and premenstrual syndrome (PMS). For a healthy supply of feel-good omega-3s, aim to eat at least 3.5 ounces of fatty fish at least twice a week.

**Black Tea:** Drinking black tea may help you recover from stressful events more quickly. One study compared people who drank 4 cups of tea daily for 6 weeks with people who drank another beverage. The tea drinkers reported feeling calmer and had lower levels of the stress hormone cortisol after stressful situations.

**Pistachios:** These nuts, as well as other nuts and seeds, are good sources of healthy fats. Eating a handful of pistachios, walnuts, or almonds every day may help lower your cholesterol, ease inflammation in your heart's arteries, make diabetes less likely, and protect you against the effects of stress. Don't overdo it, though: Nuts are rich in calories.

**Avocados:** One of the best ways to reduce high blood pressure is to get enough potassium, and half an avocado has more potassium than a medium-sized banana. A little bit of guacamole might be a good choice when stress has you craving a high-fat treat. Avocados are high in fat and calories, so watch your portion size.

**Raw Veggies:** Crunchy raw vegetables can help ease stress in a purely mechanical way. Munching celery or carrot sticks helps release a clenched jaw, and that can ward off tension.

**Milk:** Another bedtime stress buster is the time-honored glass of warm milk. Research shows that calcium eases anxiety and mood swings linked to PMS. Dietitians typically recommend skim or low-fat milk.

**Herbal Supplements:** There are many herbal supplements that claim to fight stress. One of the best studied is St. John's wort, which has shown benefits for people with mild to moderate depression. Although more research is needed, the herb also appears to reduce symptoms of anxiety and PMS. There is less data on valerian root, another herb said to have a calming effect. Tell your doctor about any supplements you take, so they can check on any possible interactions.

**De-Stress With Exercise:** Besides changing your diet, one of the best stress-busting strategies is to start exercising. Aerobic exercise boosts oxygen circulation and spurs your body to make feel-good chemicals called endorphins. Aim for 30 minutes of aerobic exercise three to four times a week. If you're not active now, tell your health care provider you're going to start exercising -- they'll root for you and make sure you're ready to get moving.

Source: WebMD

# 5 TOP TIPS FOR RELIEVING STRESS



## **Eat Nutritious Food!**

Fill your plate with lean meats, fresh fruits and veggies.

## **Exercise!**

Find something you enjoy and do it every day no matter what!

## **Drink Water!**

Try to drink eight 8-ounce glasses every day!

## **Get Lots of Sleep!**

Try to sleep at least 7 hours per night.

## **Make a To-Do List!**

Mark everything off as you go and do the hardest tasks first.

## Employee Assistance Resources

If you, your spouse or dependents are dealing with stress, anxiety, depression, substance abuse, child/adolescent issues or other family difficulties or crisis situations please contact the Employee Assistance Program or the ComPsych hotline.

**The Singing River Employee Assistance Program: (228) 696-9224 Monday - Friday 8am-5pm**

**Employee Connect, ComPsych hotline** provided by Lincoln Financial. It is available 24 hours/ 7 days a week. You can reach them at **(888) 628-4824**.