

## 15 Steps for Staying Gluten-Free and Healthy during the COVID-19 Pandemic

COVID-19 has catapulted us into a new reality that has challenged how we select, access, prepare, and eat our food. The challenges many now face during this difficult time can impact our nutrition and wellness.

Besides social distancing, handwashing, mask-wearing and disinfecting, what are some steps we can take to stay healthy during this pandemic and beyond?

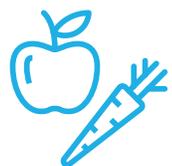
**1. Maintain a strict gluten-free diet** to ensure a strong foundation of health, reduce excess inflammation, and improve your ability to fight off infections. Learn more about [healthy eating on a gluten free diet](#).



**2. Utilize your pantry** to store shelf-stable ingredients so you don't have to grocery shop as often and to prepare you if you find empty shelves in place of your favorite gluten-free goods. Fill your pantry with canned items along with your favorite gluten-free flours, grains, pastas, crackers, and snacks. For recipe ideas using common pantry ingredients, check out our [Spring 2020 newsletter](#).



**3. Stock up on legumes.** Dried and canned beans, lentils, and peas are inexpensive, shelf-stable, and packed with nutrition. If using dried, remember to [look for grains](#) of wheat, barley and rye; rinse and drain before cooking. Rinse and drain all canned beans, lentils, and peas, as well.



**4. Store fresh fruits and vegetables** properly so they [last longer and taste better](#).

**5. Become a resourceful cook** by using a pressure cooker, crock pot, rice cooker, or air fryer to make easy meals and prep a variety of [gluten-free grains](#).



**6. Schedule meal and snack times** to give yourself more structure during the day. When and if it is available to you, speak with a registered dietitian who will help you plan healthy meals and snacks that fit your particular needs, lifestyle, condition, and/or symptoms.

**7. Be safe as you shop** by following these grocery shopping tips from the [USDA](#) and the [Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health](#). Limiting your trips to the store, sanitizing shopping baskets, distancing yourself from others, and shopping at off-hours are all recommended. You may also consider [online grocery shopping](#) for all of your grocery needs or for specific gluten-free items.



**8. Contact the Gluten-Free Food Bank**, a division of the National Celiac Association, if you are struggling during this challenging time with food access due to economic reasons or difficulties finding gluten-free foods in grocery stores. [Learn more here](#).



**9. Stay hydrated** by drinking six 8oz glasses of water a day, or more.



**10. Get adequate sleep** to decrease your risk of infectious disease, regulate your appetite, and benefit your mood.



**11. Manage stress** to boost your health. Stress can disrupt our immune system and reduce gut-brain communication. Try meditation, journaling, connecting with others, listening to music, exercising, laughing, or anything that makes you relaxed and happy. Some mindfulness apps recommended by BIDMC's GI Health Psychologist, Dr. Sarah Ballou, include Headspace (subscription), Insight Timer (free), Calm (subscription) and Breathe2Relax (free).



**12. Get outside** when possible to enjoy some fresh air and sunshine.

**13. Find ways to keep moving**, especially if you are sitting more at home. Use free time to stretch and walk around. Check YouTube for free, at-home workouts that you enjoy and can fit into your day.



**14. Be cautious about vitamins, minerals, and other supplements.** There are currently no supplements, probiotics, or over-the-counter products known to specifically prevent, treat, or cure COVID-19. Avoid any supplements making health claims to do so, and do not use supplements as a substitute for eating a healthy diet. Please reach out to your healthcare professional if you have questions about supplements that may be appropriate for you based on your individual needs, diet, and blood levels. As always, make sure your supplements are labeled gluten-free.



**15. Stay virtually connected** with friends, family, and your celiac healthcare providers. Reach out to your healthcare professionals with any questions about symptoms or your medical care.



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**We encourage you to take good care of your body and mind during this difficult time. Stay well and we look forward to staying connected!**

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