



Food and Nutrition Service  
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

A black and white photograph of a hand pushing a shopping cart through a grocery store aisle. The cart is in the foreground, and the aisle extends into the background, creating a sense of depth. The lighting is soft, and the overall tone is calm and practical.

# Food Planning *during the* Coronavirus Pandemic

**For more information about  
the Food and Nutrition Service  
response to COVID-19, please visit  
[FNS.USDA.GOV/CORONAVIRUS](https://fns.usda.gov/coronavirus)**

**May 2020**

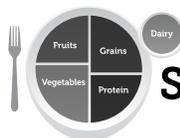
# Tips on food planning—including what to buy, how much to buy, and meal prep

- **First check your refrigerator, freezer, and pantry**—and expiration dates and best by dates. This can help you plan meals using what you have, and help you limit trips to the grocery store.
- **Make a shopping list** to stay focused in the store. List general items like “fruit” or “bread” since stores may not have some specific items.
- **Explore your shopping options**, such as pickup or delivery, as well as third-party delivery options. If you’re older, check if your store has early shopping hours just for older Americans.
- **Buy what you and your family need at this time**, and resist the urge to buy in much larger quantities. Prepare a shopping list that will cover everyone in your household for 2 weeks.
- **Choose a mix of shelf-stable, frozen, and fresh foods.** Shelf-stable examples: pastas, rice, beans, nut butters, and dried and canned goods. Frozen examples: breads, meats, vegetables, fruits, even milk. With fresh foods, buy a variety in quantities that you usually buy.
- **Eat your fresh food first.** Stock your freezer and pantry with items you can eat in the second week and beyond.
- **What should I make?** While everyone is home together, consider trying a new recipe or try new flavors to keep things interesting. For others, sticking to simple or familiar foods and tastes provides comfort.
- **Access food while school is closed.** Many school districts continue to provide meals to students in need during closures. Contact your school to see if meals may be available through pop-up food systems, grab-and-go meal pickups, or school bus routes.

For an expanded version of this tip card, including resources on food planning and activities for families at home, go to **MYPLATE.GOV/CORONAVIRUS**.

For more information on COVID-19, please visit **CORONAVIRUS.GOV**.

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