

# COVID-19 Support Program

Sugar & Your Immune System  
Food Safety Tips for COVID-19



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# Sugar & Your Immune System

- To support your immune system, remove sugar and refined carbohydrates
  - The immune system reacts similarly to high-fat, high-carb foods (i.e. the “Western diet”) as it does towards an infectious invader. (1) Eating fast food and junk food may distract our immune systems from acute immune challenges.
  - A high-sugar diet may also impair phagocytosis, the process by which specific white blood cells engulf and destroy bacteria and viruses (2)
- Heavy sugar consumption, in the context of a Western diet, is linked to chronic diseases such as hypertension and diabetes. (3)
  - Chronic diseases increase the risk of contracting COVID-19 and of suffering a severe course of infection (4)





# What to Eat Instead for Optimal Immunity

- We recommend eating a nutrient-dense, Paleo-template diet to support your immune system during this time.
  - Non-starchy vegetables – Broccoli, brussels sprouts, cauliflower, bell pepper, mushrooms, leafy greens
  - Starchy tubers and whole fruit – Sweet potatoes, winter squash, berries
  - Protein – Grass-fed beef (this is a great time to support local farmers!), pastured poultry, wild seafood, eggs, dairy products if tolerated
  - Healthy fats – Extra virgin olive oil, coconut oil, avocados, nuts and seeds, seafood
  - Gluten-free grains and legumes, soaked or sprouted, if tolerated
  - Fermented foods
  - Bone broth



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# Food Safety & COVID-19

- There is no published evidence of people contracting COVID-19 from touching food or food packaging that came into contact with the virus via an infected person.
- However, the virus does survive on surfaces for days. It lives on stainless steel and plastic for 72 hours, on cardboard for 24 hours, and on glass for 96 hours. ([5](#))
- Washing hands and sanitizing surfaces regularly helps to address this



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# Food Safety & COVID-19

- **Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health has come out with some food safety recommendations pertaining to COVID-19. ([6](#))**
  - Wipe down all surfaces on shopping carts and grocery baskets with a wipe before using.
  - Try to go to the grocery store at off-peak hours
  - Maintain a distance of six feet from other shoppers
  - Wash your hands before preparing or eating food
  - SARS-CoV-2 is an enveloped virus, which means it is covered in a lipid-based membrane that can be disrupted with soap (this is why hand washing works so well)
    - Wash thick-skinned and robust produce (large kale leaves, apples, cabbage, etc.) with a bit of natural, unscented soap and water. Rinse thoroughly before eating. You can also use a scrub brush on tougher produce.
    - If you are really concerned, you can wipe down food packages with soap and water or a hand sanitizing wipe.
  - Ordering food delivery supports local businesses; these businesses are taking great precautions to keep their food safe.



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# References

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3. Cordain L, et al. Origins and evolution of the Western diet: health implications for the 21st century. *Am J Clin Nutr*. 2005; 81(2): 341-354.
4. Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19): Information for Healthcare Professionals: COVID-19 and Underlying Conditions. *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/underlying-conditions.html>. Accessed 27 March 2020.
5. Aerosol and Surface Stability of SARS-CoV-2 as Compared with SARS-CoV-1. *NEJM*. Published 17 March 2020. Accessed 27 March 2020.
6. Food safety, nutrition, and wellness during COVID-19. *Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health*. <https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/nutritionsource/2020/03/25/food-safety-nutrition-and-wellness-during-covid-19/>. Updated 26 March 2020. Accessed 27 March 2020.



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