

SUPPORTING OLDER PEOPLE WITH FOOD DURING COVID-19

Advice for family, friends, neighbours and volunteers

Many older people are having difficulty doing their food shopping during the Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. When checking in with older people make sure they have information about supports available to them.

- Most supermarkets have introduced designated shopping hours for older people.
- If the older person uses the internet, they may be able to order online however availability of delivery slots has been affected
- Explore the option of Meals on Wheels, a food delivery service. Find out more through their local health centre, public health nurse or online.
- Find out about any community cafes or restaurants providing meals locally.
- If an older person needs practical support getting food encourage them to call the ALONE helpline on 0818 222 024, contact local community gardaí or the local authority.
- You may be able to collect a shopping list from the older person and pick up their shopping. Remember to follow HSE advice on cocooning, hand washing and social distancing.

Useful food supplies. If you are picking up supplies without a shopping list from the older person, buy nutritious foods with a good shelf life.

- Fresh bread and rolls can be frozen. Crackers will stay fresh for a few weeks in an airtight tub. Part baked rolls can be baked when needed.
- Frozen and tinned fruit and vegetables are a good alternative to fresh. Fresh root vegetables like carrots, parsnips, turnips and onions will last longer than others.
- Good protein sources are tinned baked beans, tinned fish, eggs, rashers, black pudding. Fresh meat can be divided into portions and frozen.
- Dried milk powder, evaporated, or condensed milk are a good standby. Tins or cartons of rice pudding and custard are a handy dessert.
- Remember essentials like teabags, sugar, butter, milk, toilet paper and washing up liquid. A packet of biscuits or a cake to have with a cup of tea.
- Please ask if the older person has any food allergies or special dietary needs, for example, coeliac disease or diabetes.

Spread facts, not fear. Only share information from reliable sources www.hse.ie

Immune system Eating a variety of foods helps our body to get all the nutrients it needs to support a healthy immune system. There are no food supplements that are “Covid 19 protective” or that can rapidly boost our immune systems against the virus

Vitamin D Older people are indoors more than usual now. As we normally get **vitamin D** from the sun, it’s a good idea to take a Vitamin D supplement (10ug). You can get one from a pharmacy or supermarket.

Little and often This is a worrying time for everybody. Worry can sometimes make people lose their interest in food. Encourage people to eat small meals more often in the day if they don’t feel like having large main meals.

Stay connected. Even though we can’t physically meet people as much as before, we can connect with phone or video calls. Invite an older person to join you for a virtual cuppa and a snack.