

MALNUTRITION

Helpful nutrition tips during COVID-19



WHY IS MALNUTRITION IMPORTANT TO CONSIDER FOR COVID-19?

Malnutrition is a condition where people get too much or not enough nutrition from the food they eat. In the case of COVID-19, the concern is for people who do not get enough nutrition from their diet, and there are several reasons for this:

- 1 in 3 seniors have difficulty meeting their nutritional needs. Individuals over 60 years of age are most at risk of severe symptoms from COVID-19.
- Seniors that are undernourished prior to contracting the virus have an increased risk of complications and prolonged or poor recovery.
- Food availability is limited because people are stocking up their pantries in case they fall sick and can't leave their home.
- For people that have difficulty breathing, shortness of breath, extreme tiredness from COVID-19, preparing meals can be a difficult task. They may not have the energy or stamina to stand at the kitchen counter to prepare multiple meals.

HOW DO I KNOW IF I OR THE PERSON I CARE FOR IS AT RISK OF MALNUTRITION?

Here are some risk factors of malnutrition to watch for:

- Decreased appetite
- Weight loss without trying
- Muscle wasting
- Hair loss
- Mental confusion
- Poor wound healing
- Physical disabilities such as arthritis or poor mobility
- Swallowing difficulty
- Dental problems
- Chronic illnesses such as cancer
- Being in hospital

WHAT IS THE ADVICE FOR SOMEONE AT RISK OF MALNUTRITION?

If you or someone you know is at risk of malnutrition, here are some things you can do:

- Eat small meals/snacks every 2-3 hours, even if you aren't hungry
- Use meal replacements on their own or incorporated into a smoothie or shake
- Add higher calorie foods, such as oil, cheese, cream to meals
- Add skim milk powder to soups, stews and beverages
- Snack on cheese and crackers, yogurt, nuts, meal replacements and dried fruit

For more information and resources, access a Primary Care Dietitian through your family doctor.

RESOURCES

Rides for Seniors (Fees vary)

- Drive Happiness: drivehappiness.ca or call 780-424-5438
- Care For A Ride: careforaride.com or call 780-417-2222
- Driving Miss Daisy: drivingmissdaisy.ca

Delivery Services for Seniors

https://www.seniorscouncil.net/uploads/files/COVID-19_services-for-seniors.pdf

Miscellaneous Resources for Seniors

<https://www.seniorscouncil.net/covid-19#delivery-services>

Check with your local grocery store for shopping hours for seniors and those who are high risk.

For those who are homeless:

- Hope Mission: hopemission.com or call 780-422-2018
- Edmonton Expo Centre Isolation Shelter is a 24/7 shelter for folks with COVID-19 symptoms who need to be tested and have a supported space where they can isolate and be treated as needed.
- Edmonton Expo Centre Drop in Centre a large space where folks can access vital services throughout the day such as, showers, meals, coffee, clothing, hygiene products etc. The site will soon also include, housing, cultural, mental health, and a number of other relevant supports, the day services run from 8am to 8pm.

WHAT SUPPORTS IN EDMONTON MIGHT SOMEONE AT RISK OF MALNUTRITION NEED?

If you or someone you know is at risk of malnutrition, here are some great supports and resources you can access in Edmonton:

- Malnutrition Clinic at the Royal Alexandra Hospital (requires a referral from your family doctor)
- Registered dietitian through your family doctor
- The Good Samaritan Society Seniors' Clinic (requires a referral from your family doctor)
- Free Food in Alberta: Edmonton Zone: <https://informalberta.ca/public/common/viewComboList.do?comboListId=1004952>
- Edmonton Food Bank: edmontonsfoodbank.com or call 780-425-4190

REFERENCES

1. <https://nutritioncareincanada.ca/>
2. <https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/assets/info/ppih/if-ppih-ncov-2019-public-faq.pdf>
3. <https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/assets/about/scn/ahs-scndon-malnutrition-fact-sheet.pdf>
4. <https://www.alberta.ca/coronavirus-info-for-albertans.aspx>
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6. <https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/assets/info/nutrition/if-nfs-adding-calories-and-protein-to-your-diet.pdf>
7. <https://daa.asn.au/smart-eating-for-you/smart-eating-fast-facts/medical/malnutrition-who-is-at-risk-and-things-to-consider/>