

Tips for managing your diet during social isolation



There is no doubt that social isolation and staying home may present many challenges for all of us in managing our diet, in an attempt to stay healthy and manage requirements.

Here are some tips and ideas that might be able to help you during this difficult time.

Periodising your diet

Periodised eating means eating differently at different times according to your bodies need.

If your normal training load has changed or reduced, give some consideration to your fuel (carbohydrate) needs and adjust your diet accordingly. This does not mean excluding carbohydrates as they keep your digestive system and immune health robust! Timing of carbohydrate as well as protein intake may require modification based on changes in your training and lifestyle in general.

Your VIS Dietitian can provide more specific advice and help you with this if you need.

Routine & Structure

Creating a routine or some structure in your day is a great way to ensure that your diet remains balanced. Perhaps write down your plan for the day with meals and snack breaks included.

Try to:

- Set your alarm for a reasonable time to start the day
- Make sure that you begin with a balanced breakfast
- Aim to eat approximately every 3 hours
- Plan out your meals and snacks to avoid constant grazing - this will also enable a greater and more nutrient rich intake!

Reflect & refresh

For athletes taking a break – when you're ready, take the time to reflect on your previous training and performance nutrition habits, routines and take advantage of finally getting around to having your food and training diary reviewed! Perhaps there is space for improvement and there is no better time than now to educate yourself, obtain feedback and or implement suggestions from your Sports Dietitian.

Mindful Eating

Now is a great time to practice some mindful eating strategies. This can mean tuning into your body and your appetite. This is a skill that comes naturally to some, but really needs to be thought about by others.

Ask yourself questions like:

- Am I hungry?
- What do I feel like eating right now?
- Do I feel satisfied or am I still thinking about food?

Using your external cues such as, what's available and what do I know my body needs right now, as well as internal signals like hunger, appetite and desire, can be tricky. Chat to your VIS Sports Dietitian if you need more support in this area and additional resources that may help.

Stay safe

A few tips around food and shopping hygiene to help you stay well:

- Limit visits to the supermarket
- Try to go when it may be less crowded
- Disinfect the trolley or basket handle before use
- Go through the self check out
- BYO bags
- Use credit card for payment (not cash)
- Use hand sanitiser before and after
- Wash your hands well when you get home
- Once home, consider wiping down packaging with a soapy warm cloth and prioritise washing all fresh fruits and vegetables before eating.

**Be aware of potential risks associated with ordering in via uber eats or any other delivery method. Not all cafes and restaurants will practice safe and hygienic food handling practices, which poses a risk to you, the consumer.*

Safe Supplement Use

Whilst you may not be competing, remember that the WADA & ASADA rules still apply, so make sure that you are practicing safe supplement use. Don't forget to record all supplements on your VIS AMS and please contact your VIS Sports Dietitian should you have any concerns.

Keep busy

Now is a great time to invest a little extra time and effort into your weekly menu and diet. Here's a list of food related activities that might help to fill in your day:

- Cook a meal (virtually) with your team mates and eat together (online of course) - for those who enjoy 'competition' there is no harm in creating some fun recipe rules!
- Make something you've never made before, e.g. home - made bread, gnocchi, pasta, dumplings, sushi, chia pudding, baked apples etc...
- Impress the family or your house – mates with a new recipe
- Enjoy some baking e.g. hot cross buns, fruit muffins, zucchini slice, muesli bars etc.
- Create a list of meal and snack ideas that you can revisit, when you need inspiration
- Put together your own cookbook, of your favourite recipes.
- Where possible, start a veggie patch or herb garden.
- Bulk prepare some meals and freeze them, in the case of future stages of lockdown, or for when you get back to full training, time becomes limited and you're more tired.

Please reach out to your VIS Dietitian if you require any support during this difficult time.

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