

The **Defence Nutrition Advisory Service (DNAS)** at the Institute of Naval Medicine (INM) provides expert, evidence-based advice and specific information on diet, nutrition and military feeding. As well as email support, the Service delivers a range of factsheets, briefs and workshop materials to provide focussed education and training materials on a range of nutrition topics, as well as practical tips to promote healthier lifestyle choices and optimise 'military' capability.

Coronavirus/COVID-19 Special Edition

Covid-19 – Nutrition for the immune system

No amount of good nutrition will stop you catching the Coronavirus, but many nutrients are involved in keeping your immune system functioning effectively. Plenty of fruit and vegetables will boost vitamin C and folate intakes. Wholegrain cereals are rich in B vitamins. Try some brazil nuts or sea food for a selenium boost. Also, do not forget to make the most of exercise opportunities in the sunshine to top up vitamin D levels.

Will supplements help?

Many people are taking high-dose vitamins in an effort to reduce the risk of developing the disease or reducing symptoms. There are no foods or supplements authorised by the European Food Standards Agency that claim to protect against infection.

For further information see: [BDA Coronavirus Advice](#)

What else can I do to help keep me healthy?

- Maintain good food hygiene – wash hands before touching food, or even eat food directly from the wrapper.
- Do an activity that helps you to unwind and reduce stress; high levels of stress hormones can impair the functioning of the immune system.
- Make sure to get enough sleep; 8 hours a night is recommended.
- Keep up to date with the latest government guidance: [GOV.UK/coronavirus](#)
- If you have any concerns or symptoms contact: [111.nhs.uk/covid-19](#)

DNAS resource – Mindful Eating

With us all confined to our homes, and getting out less, the temptation might be to head to the fridge or food cupboard. Mindful eating is about being aware of why you eat. We often eat due to negative emotions, stress or boredom. Think; Am I actually hungry? When you eat, do so without distractions to enjoy the experience. See [DNAS PH33](#)

How to best manage with the food that you can buy

- Use fresh produce first and store in the fridge to prolong its shelf life
- Check food labels to assess what order foods need to be eaten to prevent anything spoiling
- Root vegetables (e.g. potatoes, carrots, onions) can be stored in a cool dry place and should last for a week or more
- Try an App such as [supercook](#). Enter the ingredients you have, and the app will suggest suitable recipes
- If food is going out of date, cook and refrigerate or freeze in portions to prevent wastage; **these meals should be consumed within 3 days if refrigerated**
- Keep a stock of easily prepared food in case you become ill (e.g. soup, ready meals, packet meals)

Keeping Active whilst Home-working and in Self-isolation

Home working and self-isolating present many challenges, including how to keep active. Exercising is important for both physical and mental health, as well as burning off any excess calories.

- Search YouTube for fitness workouts from pilates to HIIT; get the family to join in!
- Spring clean the house or do some DIY
- Set an alarm to get up every 60 mins and do 5 mins of exercise to get the heart pumping

Remember, sitting still does not burn off many calories. Match your energy intake with your energy expenditure or an outcome of the current crisis will be weight gain... where high BMI is a risk factor for increased infection risk!

See [DNAS Factsheet PH31 - Sitting Less and Moving More](#)

HOW TO CONTACT THE DNAS

Contact us at: NAVYINM-EMSDNAS@mod.gov.uk Resources can be found on **Defence Connect** or the **Defence Intranet**