Tips for residential aged care during temporary food shortages

Disruptions from COVID-19 have caused food supply chain issues in many parts of Australia. This may mean you cannot access the fresh produce you normally buy to prepare meals and snacks for residents in your care.

Here are several hints and tips to prepare nutritious meals when fresh food shortages occur.

Unavailable or in short supply	Order and use
Milk, yoghurts, cheese and their alternatives	
Fresh milk	Long-life milk (cows milk and plant-based alternatives like soy milk – ensuring any alternative is calcium fortified/enriched) Powdered milk • use full cream milk powder and add skim milk powder to fortify/enrich it with extra protein and calcium • use skim milk powder to enrich soups, curries, sauces, mashed potatoes
Cold cheese	Shelf-stable cream cheese spread for sandwiches (refrigerate after opening)

Unavailable or in short supply	Order and use
Yoghurt	Frozen yoghurt or ice cream
Fresh custard	Custard powder
Lean meat, poultry, fish, eggs, tofu, nuts and seeds	
Meat and poultry	Dried or canned beans/legumes (for example, kidney beans, chickpeas, 3 bean mix, lentils) • use in soups, curries, casseroles, burgers and salads • replace some of the meat in recipes with beans/legumes (for example, use lentils in spaghetti bolognaise or extra kidney beans in chill con carne) • add baked beans to jacket potatoes or use to make a jaffle with cheese
	Canned poultry (for example, canned chicken for sandwiches)
	Textured vegetable protein (TVP) – a nutritious plant protein and can be used in the same way you use mince meat
	Tofu – marinated tofu is tasty and generally more acceptable than plain tofu
	Quorn mince – a good source of protein and fibre. Use as a mince meat substitute in bolognaise sauce, meat balls and casseroles.
	Eggs – scrambled, poached, fried, boiled
	Nuts, nut butters and seeds (store in the fridge to keep for longer)
Fresh fish	Frozen fish
	Canned tuna, salmon and sardines

Unavailable or in short supply	Order and use
Grain (cereal) foods	
	Freeze extra loaves when they are readily available
	Bread mix (white and wholemeal) – to make your own
	Flour (white and wholemeal) – to make scones, pikelets, pancakes and cakes
	Wraps and pita bread – white and wholemeal (can be frozen)
Fresh bread	English muffins, crumpets and raisin toast (can be frozen)
	Scones – plain, sweet and savoury (can be frozen)
	Crackers and crispbreads (regular and wholemeal)
	Rice and quinoa
	Pasta and noodles (for example, hokkien, soba, and egg noodles)
Vegetables and legumes/beans	
	Frozen vegetables
	Canned vegetables (for example, corn kernels, baby carrots, green beans, peas, diced capsicum, baby corn spears, beetroot)
Fresh vegetables	Dehydrated/instant potato (to make mashed potato)
	Dried and canned beans/legumes (for example, kidney beans, chickpeas, 3 bean mix, lentils)
	Canned vegetable soups (for example, minestrone, pea and ham, chicken and sweet corn soup)

Unavailable or in short supply	Order and use
Fruit	
	Frozen fruit (for food safety boil imported frozen berries for 1 minute before consumption)
	Canned fruit (for example, canned peaches, apricots, pears, mango)
Fresh fruit	Dried fruit (for example, sultanas, dried mango, dried apple, dates, prunes)
	Fruit juice (no added sugar)
	Fruit nectar (for example, apricot, pear, guava and mango nectar)

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