

COVID-19–Related Nutrition Issues in AI/AN Communities

Kibbe Conti MS, RD
LCDR USPHS, Supervisory Dietitian
Zuni Comprehensive Community Health Center



We're in This Together

We are committed to helping our community respond to diabetes and coronavirus. More than ever, we need to stay connected and informed and draw on the strength of our cultures.

“As Indigenous nations, we’ve gone through many pandemics throughout the years, relying upon our traditions and cultural values to help us navigate health and achieve well-being. Now is the time to remember and practice those important traditions. We are a people who have always respected our elders and during this time especially, will continue to protect and care for our relatives who are most vulnerable.”

—Dr. Gary Ferguson, ND (Aleut/Unangan)



Care for Yourself so You Can Care for Others

Some ways to cope with social distancing and stress COVID-19

- Take breaks from watching, reading, or listening to news stories, including social media.
- Get plenty of sleep.
- Try to eat healthy, well-balanced meals.
- Avoid alcohol and drugs.
- Take deep breaths, meditate, stretch and exercise regularly.
- Laugh.

Hearing about the pandemic continuously can be upsetting. Take time to relax and do activities you enjoy that can be done while social distancing. Treating others with kindness and respect is necessary for our ongoing health and safety.

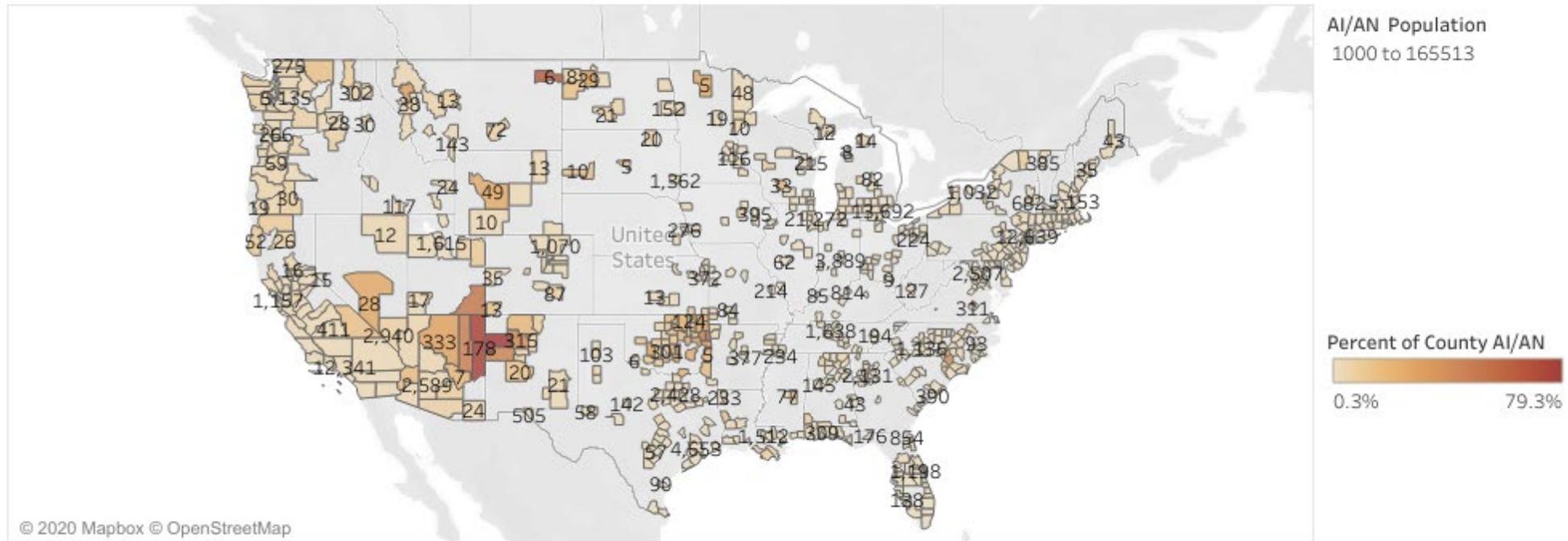
Image Credit: Portland Area – Urban Indian Health Institute



AI/AN Population with COVID-19 Confirmed Cases and Deaths by County

<https://www.nihb.org/covid-19/>

April 19 COVID-19 Confirmed Cases All Races (set at 5 min.) with AIAN Population.
Select Map Above for Most Current.



Help Stop the Spread of Coronavirus in Indian Country

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Clean your hands often.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing, or having been in a public place.
- If soap and water are not available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.
- To the extent possible, avoid touching high-touch surfaces in public places—elevator buttons, door handles, handrails, handshaking with people, etc. Use a tissue or your sleeve to cover your hand or finger if you must touch something.
- Wash your hands after touching surfaces in public places.
- Avoid touching your face, nose, eyes, etc.
- Clean and disinfect your home to remove germs: practice routine cleaning of frequently touched surfaces (for example: tables, doorknobs, light switches, handles, desks, toilets, faucets, sinks, and cell phones).
- Avoid crowds, especially in poorly ventilated spaces. Your risk of exposure to respiratory viruses like COVID-19 may increase in crowded, closed-in settings with little air circulation if there are people in the crowd who are sick.
- Avoid all non-essential travel.

Who's At Risk?

- People of all ages with underlying medical conditions, including people with:
 - chronic lung disease or moderate to severe asthma;
 - serious heart conditions;
 - conditions that can cause a person to be immunocompromised including cancer treatment, smoking, bone marrow or organ transplantation, immune deficiencies, poorly controlled HIV or AIDS, and prolonged use of corticosteroids and other immune weakening medications;
 - severe obesity;
 - diabetes;
 - chronic kidney disease and who are undergoing dialysis; and
 - liver disease.
- Older adults, especially those with chronic health conditions, are the most vulnerable to experiencing severe complications from COVID-19.

Be Prepared in Case of Illness

- Supplies for personal and diabetes care
 - **Food:** two-week supply including items appropriate for sick-day use (soup, etc.)
 - Examples of **sick-day items** to have on hand: six-pack of both regular and diet 7-Up or Sprite, two or three packets of regular and sugar-free Jell-O, Gatorade, broth
 - **Prescriptions and medical supplies:** at least 30-day supply, 90-day if possible
 - Extra insulin, glucose test strips, and maybe urine ketone sticks (foil-wrapped)
- Importance of monitoring blood sugars, taking meds, BG control
 - Exercise, sleep, healthy foods, hydration, stress reduction

COVID-19: If You Get Sick

If you feel like you are developing symptoms, be sure to call your doctor.

- Drink lots of fluids. If you have trouble keeping water down, take small sips every 15 minutes or so throughout the day to avoid dehydration.
- If you are experiencing a low blood sugar (below 70 mg/dl or your target range), eat 15 grams of simple carbs that are easy to digest like honey, jam, Jell-O, hard candy, popsicles, juice, or regular soda. Then re-check your blood sugar in 15 minutes to make sure your levels are rising. Check your blood sugar extra times throughout the day and night (generally, every 2–3 hours; if using a CGM, monitor frequently).
- If your blood sugar has registered high (BG greater than 240mg/dl) more than two times in a row, check for ketones to avoid DKA.
 - Call your doctor's office immediately, if you have medium or large ketones (and if instructed to with trace or small ketones).
- Wash your hands and clean your injection/infusion and finger-stick sites with soap and water or rubbing alcohol.

<https://www.diabetes.org/blog/coronavirus-covid-19-know-what-to-do>

If You Are Very Sick, Seek Medical Attention Immediately

When to Seek Medical Attention

If you develop any of these **emergency warning signs** for COVID-19 get **medical attention immediately**:

- Trouble breathing
- Persistent pain or pressure in the chest
- New confusion or inability to arouse
- Bluish lips or face

Call 911 if you have a medical emergency: Notify the operator that you have or think you might have COVID-19. If possible, put on a cloth face covering before medical help arrives.

Pregnant People Should Protect Themselves From COVID-19

Based on available information, **pregnant people seem to have the same risk as adults who are not pregnant.**

- Avoid people who are sick or who have been exposed to the virus.
- Clean your hands often using soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

Risks to the pregnancy and to the baby

- Pregnant people have had a higher risk of severe illness when infected with viruses from the same family as COVID-19 and other viral respiratory infections, such as influenza.

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/pregnancy-breastfeeding.html>

Breastfeeding if You Have COVID-19

- **Breast milk provides protection against many illnesses** and is the best source of nutrition for most infants.
- **In limited studies, COVID-19 has not been detected in breast milk;** however we do not know for sure whether mothers with COVID-19 can spread the virus via breast milk.
- If you are sick and choose to **direct breastfeed**:
 - Wear a facemask and wash your hands before each feeding.
- If you are sick and choose to **express breast milk**:
 - Express breast milk to establish and maintain milk supply.
 - A dedicated breast pump should be provided.
 - Wash hands before touching any pump or bottle parts and before expressing breast milk.
 - Follow [recommendations for proper pump cleaning](#) after each use, cleaning all parts that come into contact with breast milk.
 - If possible, consider having someone who is well feed the expressed breast milk to the infant.

Telehealth Services and Registered Dietitians

- RDNs in all Federally Qualified Health Centers and Rural Health Centers can provide MNT via telehealth to patients of the health centers in which they work.
- **Medicare Part B:** Services provided by RDs and nutrition professionals to be offered via telehealth.
 - Medical nutrition therapy (MNT), individual and group
 - Diabetes self-management training (DSMT), individual and group
 - Intensive behavioral therapy for cardiovascular disease (must be billed by the primary care provider)
 - Behavioral counseling for obesity, individual (must be billed by the primary care provider)

<https://www.eatrightpro.org/practice/practice-resources/telehealth>

Food Insecurity Assessment Tool & Resource List

Assess food security to help your patients and clients improve their health. Provide them with resources to get more healthy food. Patients with food insecurity:

- Are at greater risk for being emotionally distressed.
- Eat less expensive foods which are often unhealthy.
- Have little choice over what kinds of food to buy or receive for free, making it difficult or impossible to eat balanced meals.
- Have periods when they do not eat, then overeat when food is available. If they have diabetes, this makes it very difficult to manage blood sugar.
- Have a greater risk for being overweight or obese.
- Are more likely to get diseases like diabetes.
- Online Assessment Tool:
 - https://www.ihs.gov/sites/diabetes/themes/responsive2017/display_objects/documents/clinicaldocs/FoodInsecurityAssessTool.pdf

Proper Nutrition and Hydration

- People who eat a well-balanced diet tend to be healthier with stronger immune systems and lower risk of chronic illnesses and infectious diseases.
- Eat a variety of fresh and unprocessed foods every day to get the vitamins, minerals, dietary fiber, protein, and antioxidants your body needs.



Hydration

Drink enough water every day.

- Water is essential for life. It transports nutrients and compounds in blood, regulates your body temperature, gets rid of waste, and lubricates and cushions joints.
- Drink 8–10 cups of water every day.
- Water is the best choice, but you can also consume other drinks, fruits and vegetables that contain water, for example lemon juice (diluted in water and unsweetened), tea, coffee, and low-calorie beverages.
 - Be careful not to consume too much caffeine. Avoid sweetened drinks with added sugar.

Creating Access to Food and Nutrition

- **Minimize trips to the supermarket during the pandemic and eat healthy.**
- **Before you shop for coronavirus preparations...**
 - **Plan ahead.** Visualize breakfast, lunch, and dinner for at least five days. What will you serve? What do you need? Consider the foods your family likes, your food preparation methods, interests and skills, and the time and energy you will have for preparing meals.
- Working from home may not mean there is more time to cook—especially if you are now responsible for teaching your kids and doing the work your employer expects.
- If possible, send individuals who are not at higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19 to gather essentials for the home.

SNAP Benefits — Emergency Increase

40% Increase in SNAP Benefits

“To ensure that low-income individuals have enough food to feed themselves and their families during this national emergency”
—Secretary Perdue

- Currently, a household with two adults, three children, and no income can receive the maximum benefit of \$768.
- These emergency benefits would provide the average five-person household an additional \$240 monthly in food purchasing power

Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)

- Additional Funding for WIC: FNS is providing up to \$500 million in additional funding to cover increases in program participation.
 - <https://www.fns.usda.gov/wic>
- Food Package Substitution Waivers: FNS is allowing WIC agencies to substitute certain food package items when availability is limited. Agencies can also change their approved-foods lists as needed.
 - <https://www.fns.usda.gov/wic/food-package-substitution-waiver>
- Physical Presence Waivers: FNS is allowing participants to enroll or re-enroll in WIC without visiting a clinic in person and postpone certain medical tests.
 - <https://www.fns.usda.gov/disaster/pandemic/covid-19/wic-physical-presence-waiver>
- Remote Benefit Issuance Waivers: FNS is allowing WIC agencies to issue benefits remotely so participants do not have to pick up their WIC benefits in person.
 - <https://www.fns.usda.gov/disaster/pandemic/covid-19/wic-remote-benefit-issuance-waiver>

Food Planning During the Coronavirus Pandemic

What to buy?

- **First, check what you have at home.**
- **Make a shopping list:**
 - Shelf-stable: Pasta, rice, beans, nut butters, and dried and canned goods.
 - Frozen: Bread, meat, vegetables, fruit, and even milk.
 - Fresh foods: Buy a variety in quantities that you would normally buy.

Stock up on Nutrition-Packed Foods That Will Stay Fresh for a Week or Longer

- **Breads:** corn tortillas, whole grain English muffins, bagels, breads, wraps, frozen whole wheat waffles
- **Grains:** instant oatmeal, quick-cooking pasta, frozen brown rice, couscous, refrigerated pizza crust
- **Fruits:** sturdy fresh fruit (apples, citrus) or dried, plain frozen, canned in juice or water
- **Vegetables:** sturdy fresh veggies (celery, broccoli, onions, potatoes), plain frozen, low-sodium canned, sun-dried
- **Sauces:** tomato pasta sauce, salsa
- **Soups and Broths:** canned, frozen, shelf-stable cartons
- **100% Juice:** refrigerated, frozen, canned, boxed

Nutrition-Packed Foods That Keep Well

- **Milk:** fresh, canned, shelf-stable packages
- **Eggs:** fresh eggs, egg whites in cartons
- **Cheese:** sliced, cubed, shredded, crumbled, grated hard cheese
- **Beans/Legumes:** canned beans (black beans, chickpeas), dry beans
- **Nuts and seeds:** bagged, canned, nut butters
- **Chicken:** frozen or canned
- **Seafood:** frozen ready-to-cook fish fillets, frozen shrimp, canned tuna, salmon, and sardines
- **Beef:** pre-made frozen lean ground patties or meatballs
- **Flavorings:** add zing with dried herbs and spices, vinegars, mustard, hot/steak sauces, lemon/lime juice, light dressings, honey

Meal Planning

- **Explore your shopping options**

Many grocery stores offer in-store pickup, curbside pickup, or delivery. Third-party options also exist for grocery store delivery. You may find these services helpful during times of social distancing. If you are older, check if your store delivers or has early shopping hours for older Americans only.

- **What should I make?**

While everyone is home together, you may feel inclined to try a new recipe or experiment with new flavors to keep things interesting. For others, sticking to simple items or familiar foods and tastes provides comfort. Plan what works for you and your family.

Immune-Boosting Nutrition

- Foods rich in vitamin C like citrus fruits: oranges, grapefruit, lemons, limes, red bell peppers, and tomatoes.
- Antioxidant-rich spices: curry, ginger, garlic, turmeric, chili peppers and herbs can be easily added to soups, stews, stir-fry, or salad dressings.
- Foods rich in zinc include oysters, clams, mussels, cashews, liver, beef, and egg yolks.
- Magnesium-rich foods may help you to feel calmer and help support immunity.
 - Sources include beans, nuts, seeds, leafy greens, and whole grains.
- Fatty fish like salmon and sardines are rich in omega-3 fatty acids. Omega-3s may help reduce anxiety.
- Eat probiotic-rich foods such as pickles, sauerkraut, fermented teas, and yogurt.

Food Safety 101 Tips for During This Crisis and Anytime (1)

- **Wash hands and all kitchen surfaces thoroughly**
 - Pay attention to personal hygiene: wash your hands for 20 seconds before and after, preparing food. Also, keep countertops and cutting boards clean.
- **Clean and separate food items.**
 - Wash fresh produce before eating or cooking. Separate raw meat, seafood, and poultry from ready-to-eat foods. There's no evidence that food or food packaging transmits the coronavirus, yet harmful germs and bacteria can survive in foods and on equipment.

Food Safety 101 Tips for During This Crisis and Anytime (2)

- **Cook and store food properly**

- Always cook food to its proper temperature using a food thermometer. Refrigerate leftovers within two hours. Many leftovers will keep up to four or five days in the refrigerator and up to six months in the freezer.

- **Inventory your pantry and refrigerator**

- Check and discard items past the “Use By” date. Remember the “Best if Used By” date indicates best flavor but is not a safety date. Most canned goods such as soups can last two to five years. For more specific information, check USDA’s FoodKeeper App
 - <https://www.foodsafety.gov/keep-food-safe/foodkeeper-app>

Food Safety 101 Tips for During This Crisis and Anytime (3)

- **Check the food label to make the best choice for you.**
 - Some food choices more than others can help you feel your best and stay active. The food label provides helpful information for those who are monitoring certain nutrients, such as those individuals reducing salt, cutting back on sugar, or minimizing intake of highly processed foods.
- **Minimize trips to the grocery store and make healthy choices.**
 - Many supermarkets are responding to the coronavirus pandemic by creating special hours for vulnerable guests and older individuals. Make a point to shop during these hours and stock your basket with healthy choices from all food groups, including whole grains, lean meats, fruits, and vegetables. If fresh is not an option, choose frozen and canned alternatives that are often more budget friendly.

Food Safety 101 Tips for During This Crisis and Anytime

Additional Resources

The following have additional tips for food safety practices

- EatRight.org
 - <https://www.eatright.org/coronavirus>
- Food Safety.gov
 - <https://www.foodsafety.gov/keep-food-safe/4-steps-to-food-safety>
- American Heart Association
 - <https://www.heart.org/en/healthy-living/healthy-eating/cooking-skills/storing/food-safety---how-to-store-and-how-long-to-keep-leftovers>

COVID-19 Survey: Impact of Organizations That Serve Older Adults

Most ***pressing needs*** include food, medicine, protective equipment, and social connection

- 64% need help picking up groceries or meal deliveries
- 63% accessing protective equipment and cleaning supplies (gloves, masks, etc.)
- 62% say staying socially connected while physically distancing from people
- 52% affording prescription medications
- 51% affording food
- April 2020, n=1003

Access to Food While School Is Closed

- Check for local programs in your area, such as Meals to You. Contact your local school to learn about meals that may be available through pop-up food systems, grab-and-go meal pickups, or school bus routes.
 - <https://www.usda.gov/media/press-releases/2020/03/17/usda-announces-feeding-program-partnership-response-covid-19>
- USDA National Hunger Hotline
 - <https://www.hungerfreeamerica.org/about/our-work/usda-national-hunger-hotline>
 - Operated by Hunger Free America—can be reached Monday through Friday between 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. Eastern at 1-866-3-HUNGRY (1-866-348-6479)

USDA Meals for Kids Site Finder

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/meals4kids>

The screenshot shows the 'Find Meals for Kids' interface. The top left corner features the USDA logo and the text 'Food and Nutrition Service U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE'. The main title 'Find Meals for Kids' is displayed in a blue header. The left side of the interface is a map of the United States and Mexico, with major cities like Denver, Chicago, Detroit, New York, Boston, Philadelphia, Washington, St. Louis, Dallas, Houston, Miami, and Mexico City labeled. The right side contains a search bar with the placeholder text 'Find address or place', a slider for 'Show results within 5 Miles', and a dropdown menu for 'Select filters to apply'. A large blue text overlay 'Click on image to enter' is positioned over the map area.

#NewNutritionFactsLabel

<https://www.fda.gov/food/nutrition-education-resources-materials/new-nutrition-facts-label>

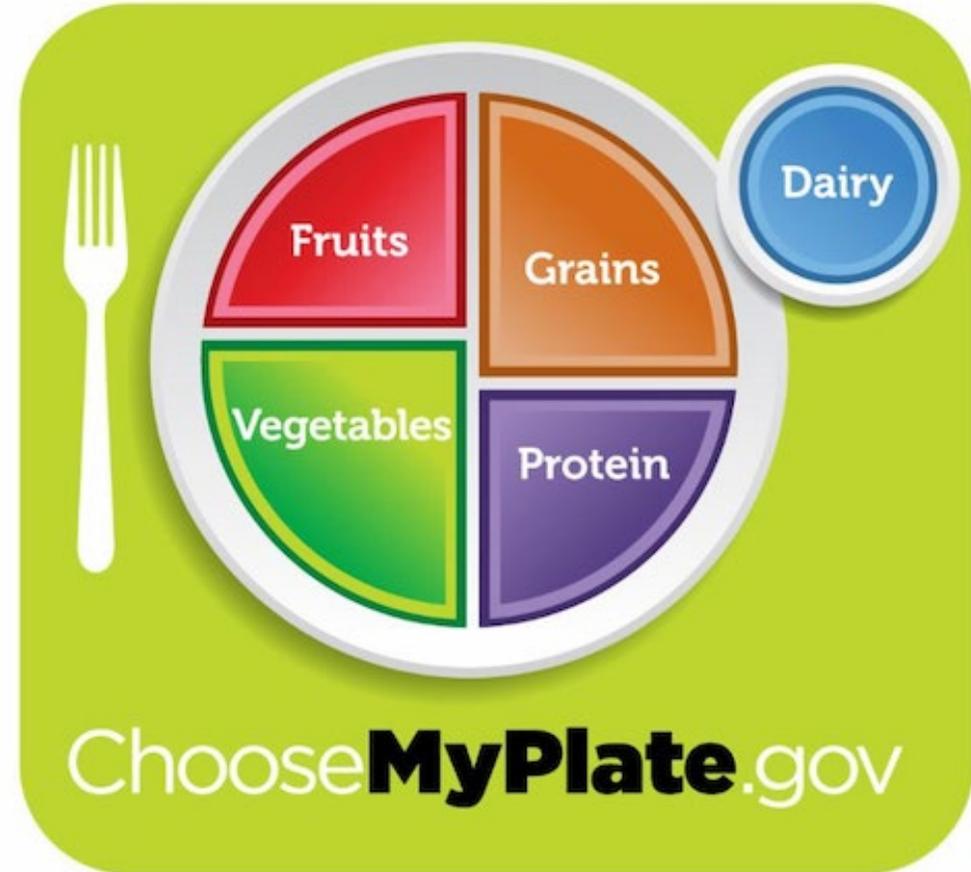


The New Nutrition Facts Label

Videos, Social Media Tools, Fact Sheets, CMEs

Nutrition Facts	
Servings Per Container →	4 servings per container Serving size 1 1/2 cup (208g) ← Serving Size
Calories →	240 ← % Daily Value (%DV)
	Amount per serving
	% Daily Value*
Total Fat 4g	5%
Saturated Fat 1.5g	8%
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 5mg	2%
Sodium 430mg	19%
Total Carbohydrate 46g	17%
Dietary Fiber 7g	25%
Total Sugars 4g	
Includes 2g Added Sugars	4%
Protein 11g	
Vitamin D 2mcg	10%
Calcium 260mg	20%
Iron 6mg	35%
Potassium 240mg	6%

* The % Daily Value (DV) tells you how much a nutrient in a serving of food contributes to a daily diet. 2,000 calories a day is used for general nutrition advice.



Core Community Values

To any one of these, add “...to stop COVID-19.”

- We will live accordingly
- We will respect one another
- We will think before we act and consider the consequences
- We will help one another
- We will give advice and counsel one another
- We will be honest and trust one another
- We will love one another
- We will be kind and generous to one another
- We will listen and pay attention to one another
- We will be empathetic to one another

We Can Do It!

