

# Food News

Volume 9, issue 9

September

Welcome to Food News. The Long COVID dietitian has taken over for September. We hope you will find it an interesting read.



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## September

### Warwickshire Food Forum

#### Food News

is produced by the education & choice sub-group of Warwickshire Food forum

The forum is a multi-agency partnership aiming to improve food

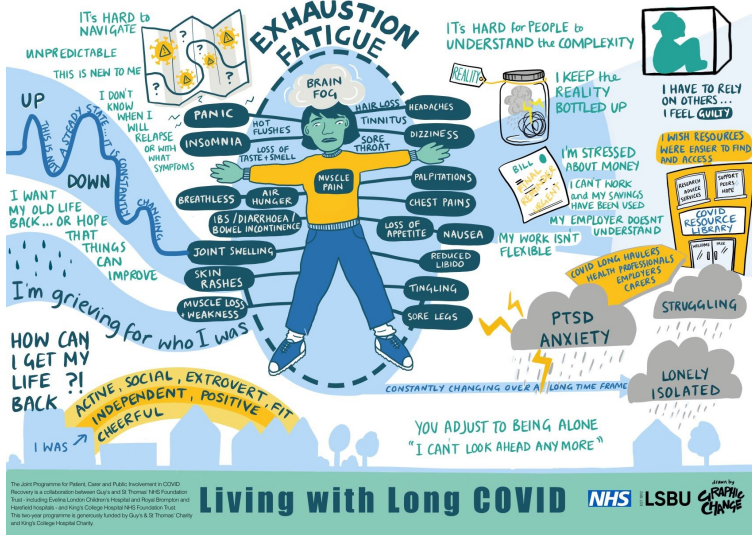
choices for people in Warwickshire.

The focus is on making food affordable, sustainable and providing information to help people make

healthy choices.

The group will also ensure that there is Warwickshire wide help for people who have difficulty affording food.

Following a coronavirus (COVID-19) infection, symptoms can last for more than 12 weeks. This is called Long COVID. The government’s latest estimate is that 1.9 million people are experiencing self reported symptoms of Long COVID (~ 3% of the population). Symptoms can vary widely from person to person, but they can include fatigue, shortness of breath, chest pain, brain fog, difficulty concentrating, and muscle aches.



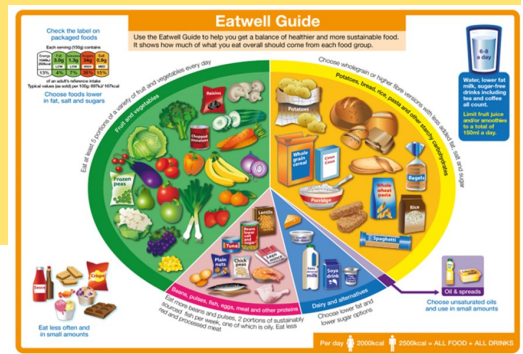
As a proportion of the UK population, the prevalence of self-reported long COVID is greatest in people:

- ⇒ aged 35 to 69 years
- ⇒ females
- ⇒ people living in more deprived areas
- ⇒ those working in social care
- ⇒ those with another activity-limiting health condition or disability.

Fatigue, smell and taste change and loss, brain fog and muscle aches can make tasks such as shopping, food preparation and even eating challenging, leading to a poor nutritional intake, which can increase fatigue and delay recovery.

To support recovery, our body needs a well balanced diet including:

- ⇒ A range of vitamins and minerals ~ to support immune function
- ⇒ Proteins ~ for tissue repair and muscle recovery
- ⇒ Complex carbohydrates ~ for long lasting energy
- ⇒ Fibre rich foods ~ to promote gut health
- ⇒ Sufficient hydration



The Mediterranean diet and the Eatwell plate can help us achieve all of the above.

If you, or someone you know, is finding it tricky to achieve a balanced diet and achieve all the right nutrition to help with recovery, keep on reading for some hints and tips.

Any change, no matter how small will be a step in the right direction.

## Hints and tips



- ♥ Base meals on starchy carbohydrates to help maintain energy levels and increase the fibre content. Weetabix, porridge, oatcakes or wholegrain toast make a great breakfast. Choose beans, lentil based soups or a baked potatoes with skin on for lunch and add pulses or beans to casseroles and mince dishes for evening meals.
- ♥ Easily accessible protein sources include yoghurts, nut butters and milk at breakfast. Tinned fish such as mackerel, sardines or salmon or beans on toast make an easy lunch and adding lentils and chickpeas to main dishes increases the protein content with minimum effort.
- ♥ Aim for **five** a day of fruit and vegetables although any increase counts! Try to squeeze in two portions of fruit or veg with each meal to meet that goal. Sprinkle fruit on your breakfast, hide vegetables in sauces, casseroles, stir fries and soups. Embrace tinned and frozen fruit and vegetables for ease (they are often pre chopped), economy and less waste (more about that later!) and buy in season for cheaper fruits and vegetables. Tinned fruit and veg in their own juice all count towards your 5-a-day.

## How can you support someone who has Long COVID?

- ♥ Offer to help with planning, shopping and preparation of food. Meal planning takes a lot of mental effort —see the resources section of this newsletter for a 7 day meal planner example.
- ♥ Help batch cook to have emergency wholesome meals in the freezer. Ready meals can be a useful way to ensure a warm meal—just keep an eye on the traffic light system on the packaging and try to choose greener options.
- ♥ Swap main meals to times when energy levels are higher e.g. Eat main meal at lunchtime.
- ♥ Explore local services e.g. lunch clubs or meal delivery companies and online shopping. Warwickshire has just launched its new hot meal delivery service door to door:  
<https://www.wrccrural.org.uk/services/community-food-fleet/>
- ♥ For information and support around taste and smell loss and change, try <https://www.fifthsense.org.uk/> or <https://abscent.org/>.
- ♥ For support for people with long COVID and their carers <https://www.yourcovidrecovery.nhs.uk/> .
- ♥ For an excellent collection of evidence based videos regarding COVID 19 and nutrition, look at this series of talks created by Plymouth University:  
<https://www.plymouth.ac.uk/research/dietetics-and-health/covid-knowledge-hub/nutrition-and-covid-19-recovery-talks>
- ♥ If you are concerned regarding symptoms, which are not improving, please speak to your GP . There is a Long COVID clinic at George Elliot Hospital and the Post COVID service which covers South Warwickshire. Please speak to your GP regarding referrals.

# Truth or Myth?

**Fresh fruit and vegetables are better for you than tinned and frozen versions.**



This article aims to explore this question and give you the facts so you can make informed choices.

## Not a new fad

The practice of freezing food to preserve it for future consumption has existed since 3000BC. The Ancient Chinese would use ice cellars to keep their foods preserved.

Whilst preserving food in tin cans is relatively new, it has been in practice for over 200 years.

## The process and nutrients

Many canned and frozen fruits and vegetables are processed and frozen within a few hours of harvesting, meaning that they can maintain more nutrition than some fresh foods that can take days to get to supermarket shelves. A review of the evidence in 2007 showed that spinach can lose 100% of its vitamin C content seven days after being harvested and kept at room temperature. However, a spinach leaf that is frozen immediately following harvest only loses 30%.

Nutrients may be lost in the initial heating part of the canning process, however due to the lack of oxygen in the tin, the nutritional value of the food is maintained. Conversely, freezing foods loses fewer nutrients initially, but oxidation can happen during storage, and this reduces the nutritional value.

Overall, the study concluded that frozen and canned foods can be just as nutritious, maybe even more so than fresh, depending on the nutrient in question and the way in which the fresh food is stored.

**SUMMARY:** Aim for a wide variety of fresh, frozen and tinned fruit and vegetables to ensure maximum nutritional intake.

## Additional benefits?



**Convenience** – easy to store and add to recipes or serve as a side dish. Possibility of buying pre chopped veg and fruit for ease of use.



**Budget friendly** – often cheaper than fresh to buy, especially if it is out of season.



**Less waste** – easier to add in exactly how much you need, no left over halves to sit around the countertop.

However ...



Do look out for fresh in season fruit and vegetables as these might be cheaper than frozen.



Be aware that sometimes salt and sugar is added to tinned vegetables – check the packaging.



Check tinned fruit is in its own juices rather than in syrup.

## Top Tips

- ♥ Add mixed frozen veg to stir fries, stews and curries. Use frozen berries in smoothies, porridge and yoghurt.
- ♥ Add tinned beans, chickpeas, and lentils to chilli, soup and salads.
- ♥ Try to steam or microwave fruit and vegetables, rather than boiling, to reduce loss of water-soluble vitamins.



## What's in Season?

### Fruit

Blackberries, Damsons, Pears, Plums, Raspberries, Rhubarb, Strawberries.

### Vegetables

Aubergine, Beetroot, Broccoli, Brussels Sprouts, Butternut Squash, Carrots, Cauliflower, Celery, Courgettes, Chicory, Chillies, Cucumber, Garlic, Kale, Kohlrabi, Leeks, Lettuce, Mangetout, Marrow, Onions, Parsnips, Peas, Peppers, Potatoes, Pumpkin, Radishes, Rocket, Runner Beans, Samphire, Sorrel, Spinach, Spring Greens, Spring Onions, Summer Squash, Sweetcorn, Swiss Chard, Tomatoes, Turnips, Watercress, Wild Mushrooms.

### Sweetcorn, courgette and potato hash with fried egg

*As the heat goes from the summer, use up those courgettes and enjoy this comforting easy dish. Taken from Sweetcorn, courgette and potato hash recipe | delicious. magazine (deliciousmagazine.co.uk)*

Ingredients—serves 4

- 400g potatoes, cut into small cubes ( can also use frozen or tinned)
- 3 tbsp sunflower oil
- 2 courgettes, diced
- 350g frozen sweetcorn or tinned sweetcorn
- 1 large red chilli, deseeded and finely chopped
- Bunch spring onions, finely sliced
- 2 garlic cloves, finely sliced
- 4 large free-range eggs

1. Boil the potato cubes for 5 minutes. Drain well.
2. Heat 2 tbsp oil in a large, deep frying pan over a medium heat. Cook the potatoes for 6 minutes, turning once. Add the diced courgettes and fry for 3 minutes until golden.
3. Add the sweetcorn to the pan and stir in the chilli, sliced spring onions and garlic. Season and cook for 5 minutes until cooked through.
4. Fry the eggs in the remaining oil in a separate frying pan. Serve on the courgette and potato hash.



Every year the British Dietetic Association celebrate Sustainable September, promoting the benefits – to health and the planet – of a sustainable diet .



They have produced a list of favourite meal swaps which champions seasonal vegetables and fruit. Find it here:

[Meal swaps: Making our favourite meals more sustainable | British Dietetic Association \(BDA\)](#)

Or search “BDA sustainable September meal swaps” on your search engine.

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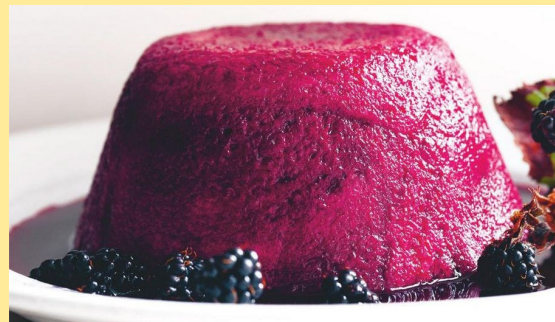
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### Hedgerow pudding

*( taken from <https://thehappyfoodie.co.uk/recipes/hedgerow-pudding/>) This autumnal pudding works with fresh hedgerow fruit now and would also work well with frozen mixed berries when fresh not available. Serves 4-5 and works better made the day before.*

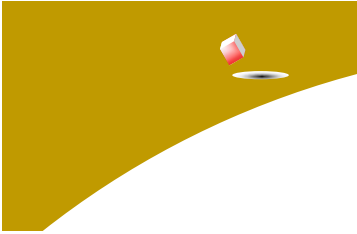
#### Ingredients

- 400g blackberries
- 200g raspberries
- 100g damsons or plums
- 75g hazelnuts (chopped)
- 150g sugar
- 8 slices of slightly stale white bread, crusts removed
- single cream, to serve



#### Directions

- 1) Cook the fruit, nuts and sugar over a low heat, until the sugar has dissolved. Turn the heat up a little and cook for a further 3–5 minutes, until the fruit is tender. Add a little sugar if needed.
- 2) Line a 750ml basin with clingfilm, with enough hanging over the edges to fold over the top and twist together. Then line the basin with the white bread, keeping one slice for the top.
- 3) Strain the fruit, keeping the juice. Pour a little of the juice over the bread in the basin, to make the bread purple. Put the fruit into the hollow. Put the last slice of bread over the top and fold over the rest of the bread. Pull closed the edges of clingfilm and twist them tightly together. Cover with a small saucer, put a heavy object on top of the saucer and refrigerate overnight.
- 4) When ready to eat, open out the clingfilm, put a plate on top and invert to turn out. Pour remaining juice over the pudding to cover any white areas. Serve with any remaining juice and single cream or crème fraiche.



## Warwickshire Food Forum

Editor: Rebecca Mitchell  
Long COVID and Stroke Dietitian  
Warwick Hospital, Lakin Road,  
Warwick,  
CV34 5BW 5BW

Phone: 01926 600818 option 3  
E-mail: [dietitians@swft.nhs.uk](mailto:dietitians@swft.nhs.uk)

If you have an interest in food, hydration, food costs, sustainability and health, and would like to join the food forum, please contact the editor.

If you would like more information about any of the articles in this newsletter, please contact the editor who will pass this on to the author of the article.

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## References and further reading

### Long COVID article

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/healthandsocialcare/conditionsanddiseases/bulletins/prevalenceofongoingsymptomsfollowingcoronaviruscovid19infectionintheuk/30march2023>

<https://www.bda.uk.com/resource/long-covid-and-diet.html>

An example 7 day meal planner [bnf-s-7-day-meal-planner.pdf \(nutrition.org.uk\)](#)

### Truth and Myth

<https://www.bbcgoodfood.com/howto/guide/are-tinned-fruit-and-vegetables-good-you>

<https://www.bbc.com/future/article/20200427-frozen-fresh-or-canned-food-whats-more-nutritious>

<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1002/jsfa.2825>

Buy in season for cheaper fruits and vegetables. <https://www.bda.uk.com/food-health/your-health/sustainable-diets/seasonal-fruit-and-veg-a-handly-guide.html>

Recipe from [Sweetcorn, courgette and potato hash recipe | delicious. magazine \(deliciousmagazine.co.uk\)](#)