

# Food Safety During COVID-19



## Can food be contaminated by COVID-19?

Scientists and food safety authorities across the world are closely monitoring the spread of COVID-19. There is currently no evidence that food is a likely source or route of transmission of the virus.

The World Health Organization (WHO) has issued precautionary recommendations including advice on the need to continue to follow good hygiene practices during food handling and preparation, such as washing hands, cooking meat thoroughly and avoiding potential cross-contamination between cooked and uncooked foods. More information can be found on the WHO website.

## Is it safe to have food delivered or use drive through food service?

Food delivery helps with maintaining physical distancing and reduces the amount of surfaces and people that we come into contact with. There is no current evidence that eating takeout food or using a food delivery service increases your risk of illness. Thoroughly washing your hands with soap and warm water or using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer after handling any take-away containers and before eating will minimize any risk.

## Do I need to clean items picked up at grocery stores.

COVID-19 is mainly spread from person-to-person through respiratory droplets. The COVID-19 virus may remain on surfaces from hours to days and some spread through this route may also be occurring.

Customers and employees are encouraged to use appropriate hand washing or sanitizers throughout the day, and always before eating, after using the washroom, when they arrive to work, when they arrive home and before they touch their eyes, nose, and mouth.

The use of alcohol based hand rubs and alcohol based wipes in these environments will help to remove COVID-19 from frequently touched surfaces.

In response to these concerns, most stores have increased the frequency of cleaning and disinfection of high touch surfaces to at least twice daily or more when possible. This applies to these frequently touched items:

- Point of sale devices. We also recommend employees (cashiers) limit direct handling of credit cards and loyalty cards where possible and allow customers to scan them.
- Self-service scanning areas and payment touch screens.
- Handles of grocery store baskets and carts.
- Doors, railings, and common counter areas.

Stores are also asked to post signs reminding customers to wash their hands and use hand sanitizer.

## How do I clean fresh produce?

Produce can be washed using friction under running water.

## Disposing of packaging

Food packaging and general household item packaging may be disposed as usual based on IWMC requirements for recycling, composting and waste. IWMC is providing a COVID-19 & Waste Watch Q&A on their website that offers specific guidance.

## Can COVID-19 be passed through handling money?

COVID-19 is spread person-to-person through respiratory droplets and through contact with contaminated surfaces. Customers and employees must use appropriate hand washing or sanitizers throughout the day, and always before eating, after using the washroom, and before they touch their eyes, nose, and mouth. We also recommend:

- Employees who handle money must wash their hands with soap and water before preparing food.
- Dedicate employees (cashiers) to handle money and credit cards so they are segregated from preparing foods.
- Cashiers who handle money, including credit cards, must wash their hands frequently and be reminded to not touch their face.
- Where possible use point of sale (POS) devices that do not require customers to touch them.
- Frequently clean and disinfect POS devices.

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COVID-19  
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