



FAQ: COVID-19 & Food Safety

May 5, 2020

The COVID-19 pandemic has prompted several questions about food handling and safety. The following guidance comes from the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

Q Is the U.S. food supply safe?

Currently, there is no evidence of food or food packaging being associated with transmission of COVID-19.

Unlike foodborne gastrointestinal (GI) viruses like norovirus and hepatitis A that often make people ill through contaminated food, SARS-CoV-2, which causes COVID-19, is a virus that causes respiratory illness and not gastrointestinal illness, and foodborne exposure to this virus is not known to be a route of transmission.

It may be possible that a person can get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose, or possibly their eyes, but this is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads. It's always important to follow the four key steps of food safety: [clean, separate, cook, and chill](#).

Q Will there be food shortages?

There are no nationwide shortages of food, although in some cases the inventory of certain foods at your grocery store might be temporarily low before stores can restock.

State food safety regulators are closely monitoring the food supply chain for any shortages in collaboration with industry, federal and local partners. We are in regular contact with food manufacturers and grocery stores.

Q What are the most important things I need to know to keep myself and others safe at the grocery store?

There are steps you can take to help protect yourself, grocery store workers and other shoppers, such as wearing a face covering, practicing social distancing, and using wipes on the handles of the shopping cart or basket. Read more tips from the FDA: [Shopping for Food During the COVID-19 Pandemic - Information for Consumers](#).



Q Can I get coronavirus from food, food packaging, containers or preparation areas?

Currently, there is no evidence of food, food containers or food packaging being associated with transmission of COVID-19. Like other viruses, it is possible that the virus that causes COVID-19 can survive on surfaces or objects.

If you are concerned about contamination of food or food packaging, wash your hands after handling food packaging, after removing food from the packaging, before you prepare food for eating, and before you eat. Consumers can follow [CDC guidelines on frequent hand washing](#) with soap and water for at least 20 seconds; and frequently clean and disinfect surfaces.

Q Can I get COVID-19 from a worker handling my food?

Currently, there is no evidence of food or food packaging being associated with transmission of COVID-19. However, the virus that causes COVID-19 is spreading from person-to-person in some communities in the U.S. The CDC recommends that if you are sick, stay home until you are better and no longer pose a risk of infecting others.

Anyone handling, preparing and serving food should always follow [safe food handling procedures](#), such as washing hands and surfaces often.

Q Should food facilities (grocery stores, manufacturing facilities, restaurants) perform any special cleaning or sanitation procedures to prevent transmission?

The CDC recommends routine cleaning of all frequently touched surfaces in the workplace, such as workstations, countertops and doorknobs. Use the cleaning agents that are usually used in these areas and follow the directions on the label. CDC does not recommend any additional disinfection beyond routine cleaning at this time.

View the current [list of products that meet EPA's criteria for use against SARS-CoV-2](#), the cause of COVID-19.

Restaurants and retail food establishments are regulated at the state and local level. State and local regulators use the Wisconsin [Food Code](#), which is based on the FDA Model Food Code to verify safe food handling practices at these businesses. FDA-regulated wholesale food manufacturers are required to maintain clean facilities, including, as appropriate, clean and sanitized food contact surfaces, and to have food safety plans in place. Food safety plans include a hazards analysis and risk-based preventive controls and include procedures for maintaining clean and sanitized facilities and food contact surfaces. See: [FSMA Final Rule for Preventive Controls for Human Food](#).



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