

WHAT IS COVID-19?

Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is a respiratory illness that can spread from person to person. Patients with COVID-19 have experienced mild to severe respiratory illness, including fever, cough and shortness of breath. The virus that causes COVID-19 is a novel (new) coronavirus. It is not the same as other types of coronaviruses that commonly circulate among people and cause mild illness, like the common cold. Those who are older than 60, have underlying health conditions such as heart or lung disease, and diabetes, are particularly at risk.

HOW DOES COVID-19 SPREAD?

The virus that causes COVID-19 is thought to spread mainly from person-to-person, between people who are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet) through respiratory droplets when an infected person coughs or sneezes. 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.

CAN COVID-19 BE SPREAD THROUGH FOOD?

The CDC, FDA, and ISDH are not aware of any reports at this time of human illnesses that suggest COVID-19 can be transmitted by food or food packaging. However, it is always important to follow good hygiene practices (i.e., wash hands and surfaces often, separate raw meat from other foods, cook to the right temperature, and refrigerate foods promptly) when handling or preparing foods.

HOW DO FOOD ESTABLISHMENT MANAGERS AND EMPLOYEES PREVENT THE SPREAD OF DISEASE?

Food employees should stay home when you are sick. Clean frequently touched surfaces using EPA-approved sanitizing solution and change it at least every four hours. Ensure dishwasher and/or three-compartment sinks are used properly and contain the appropriate level of sanitizer and/or water temperature for the final rinse. Until told otherwise, restrict dine-in and only offer food to patrons using drive thru, take-out, and delivery services. Restrict self-service options like buffets, salad bars, and provide prepackaged utensils.

WHAT SHOULD BE DONE IN THE EVENT OF A BODY FLUID INCIDENT?

If a customer or employee vomits or has diarrhea, implement the same protocols used for Norovirus or Hepatitis A. Provide personal protective equipment and have the supplies needed for cleanup, including an approved disinfectant effective against viruses. The CDC recommends 1/3 cup of bleach to 1 gallon of water for environmental cleaning after a body fluid incident.

FOOD EMPLOYEE PERSONAL HYGIENE AND HEALTH

Wash your hands with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom; before eating; and after blowing your nose, coughing or sneezing. Use an alcohol hand sanitizer if soap and water are not readily available. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth. Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue and then throw it away. Food employees should stay home if they are sneezing, coughing or have fever until no longer experiencing symptoms. Employees diagnosed with COVID-19 should notify their management and be excluded while symptomatic

and allowed back to work 72 hours after fever has subsided (without use of a fever reducer), other symptoms have improved (for example, when cough or shortness of breath have improved), and at least 7 days after your symptoms first appeared per CDC recommendations. If a food employee is positive for COVID-19, management should consult with their local health department for guidance. Food employees exposed to COVID-19 should monitor their health following CDC guidance (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/steps-when-sick.html>), and contact their healthcare provider right away if they develop symptoms.

FOR FOOD REGULATORS

On March 16, 2020, Gov. Eric J. Holcomb issued [Executive Order 20-04](#) announcing restaurants, bars, nightclubs and other establishments that provide in-dining services to close to in-person patrons through March 31, 2020. The intent of the executive order is to keep people from congregating in a dining area. Retail food facilities may allow people to walk in to pick up food or have employees bring an order out to a vehicle. Lines of customers waiting for a takeout order should be discouraged and could be addressed by signage or employees promoting social distancing (staying at least six feet apart and/or no more than 10 people at a time). Jurisdictions and food businesses should work together to decide the most effective way to implement this executive order. Implementation should also take into consideration disease activity within the community.

Food industry is a part of the nation's critical infrastructure and food regulatory professionals should work with food industry partners to ensure they are able to remain in operation while adhering to the Governor's executive order. Information is rapidly evolving in regards to COVID-19 and information in this document may be subject to change.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Additional information and resources for COVID-19 are available at the links below. The links below include the most recent guidance, but are also potentially subject to change.

- CDC COVID-19 webpage: <https://coronavirus.gov>
- FDA Food Safety and COVID-19: <https://www.fda.gov/food/food-safety-during-emergencies/food-safety-and-coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19>
FDA COVID-19 webpage: <https://www.fda.gov/emergency-preparedness-and-response/mcm-issues/coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19>
- ISDH COVID-19 webpage: in.gov/coronavirus
- U.S. EPA Registered Antimicrobial Products for Use Against Novel Coronavirus SARS-CoV-2, the Cause of COVID-19: https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2020-03/documents/sars-cov-2-list_03-03-2020.pdf