



THE OHIO STATE  
UNIVERSITY

# COVID-19 FAQ FOR FOOD BANKS RECEIVING FOOD AND CLEANING

## CAN COVID-19 BE SPREAD THROUGH FOOD?

- Transmission of COVID-19 through food, food packages or even food handlers has not been identified as a risk factor for this illness
- Evidence suggests it may remain viable for hours to days on surfaces. CDC recommends cleaning followed by disinfection as a best practice for prevention of COVID-19

## IS IT SAFE TO ACCEPT FOOD FROM COUNTRIES OR STATES IMPACTED BY COVID-19?

- With decades of data related to influenza, another similar respiratory virus, there is no data to indicate that food distribution channels like grocery stores or distribution warehouses are transmission nodes.
- Currently, there is no data to suggest that accepting food from an area impacted by COVID-19 is a risk factor for disease spread.

## SHOULD FOOD PACKAGES BE CLEANED BEFORE THEY ARE USED?

- Continue routine operating procedures in evaluating the integrity of packaging as well as for any soil already in place.
- Follow risk management practices including hand hygiene regimens of handwashing followed by hand sanitizer according to CDC guidelines.

## HOW SHOULD CLEANING AND DISINFECTION BE HANDLED?

- Volunteers and staff should wash hands and use hand sanitizer regularly.
- Disinfect surfaces like railings, doorknobs, tables, baskets, etc on a regular basis.
- Use non-porous plastic tables that can be easily disinfected whenever possible.
- CDC is advising use of disinfectants on the EPA list, which can be found at: [go.ncsu.edu/epacovid-19](https://go.ncsu.edu/epacovid-19).
  - Note: this list is based on current data, but compounds have not been validated for COVID-19
- Bleach may be used to disinfect surfaces, but the concentration is higher for COVID-19 than for everyday sanitation:
  - 5 tablespoons bleach per gallon of water

For more info, visit: [www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov)

Updated March 19, 2020



**NC STATE**  
EXTENSION