



THE OHIO STATE
UNIVERSITY

COVID-19 AND FOOD SAFETY FAQ

IS CORONAVIRUS A CONCERN AT GROCERY STORES?

CDC, FDA and USDA are not aware of any reports at this time that suggest COVID-19 can be transmitted by food or food packaging. Current evidence shows the biggest risk of transmission of COVID-19 is being around individuals who are symptomatic. Food businesses should be following employee health policies and local health department recommendations to keep these individuals home.

CAN I GET SICK WITH COVID-19 FROM TOUCHING FOOD OR PACKAGING IF THE CORONAVIRUS WAS PRESENT ON IT?

- The risk of transfer of viruses from food or packaging is very low, based on current research.
- To further minimize risk, handling food packaging should be followed by handwashing and/or using hand sanitizer.

WHAT STEPS CAN SOMEONE TAKE TO MINIMIZE RISK WHEN SHOPPING AT THE GROCERY STORE?

- Use hand sanitizer when entering stores, and wash hands and/or use sanitizer as soon as possible after leaving.
- Wear a cloth face covering while shopping.
- Try to maintain social distancing as much as possible while shopping.
- Avoid touching surfaces or items unnecessarily and avoid touching your mouth, nose or face.
- Do not go shopping when showing symptoms or think you have been exposed to the virus.

HOW SHOULD PRODUCE BE HANDLED?

- Consider using hand sanitizer before and after selecting produce items.
- Avoid touching multiple produce items when making selections.
- As per good food handling practices in general, wash hands before food preparation or eating, avoid touching the face and consider supplementing handwashing with the use of hand sanitizer.

WHAT IS MY GROCERY STORE DOING TO MINIMIZE MY RISK?

- Many stores are following CDC guidelines on cleaning and disinfection. Some are limiting hours to allow for additional cleaning and disinfection.
- Stores may also be providing hand sanitizer to customers and be asking sick employees or customers to leave.
- Grocery employees are essential employees and encouraged to wear cloth face coverings
- Stores may also limit the number of people allowed to shop at one time, and enforce physical distancing while in line inside and outside the store.

For more info, visit: www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov

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NC STATE

EXTENSION