RECEIVING AND FOOD PACKAGING

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.

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.

There is no history of a public health authority advise individuals to stop shopping for food at certain stores due to the risk of respiratory virus transmission.

Currently, there is no data to suggest that accepting food from an area experiencing this illness is a risk factor for disease spread.

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

- Continue routine operating procedures in evaluating the integrity of packaging as well as for any soil are already in place.
- Follow risk management practices including hand hygiene regimens of washing coupled with sanitizing (using an alcohol-based sanitizer, as per CDC’s guidance).

IF WE WANT TO CLEAN AND DISINFECT, WHAT SHOULD BE USED?

- CDC advises using compounds on the list of EPA recommended disinfectants, which can be found at: go.ncsu.edu/epacovid-19
  - Note: this list is based on current data, but most compounds have not been validated for inactivation of the virus causing COVID-19

- Bleach may be used to disinfect surfaces, but the concentration is higher than for everyday sanitation: 5 tablespoons bleach per gallon of water

SHOULD FOOD PACKAGES BE CLEANED BEFORE THEY ARE USED?

- When substituting ingredients, be aware of allergens in new ingredients.
- Any change should be followed with a review of your food safety management plan.

WHAT IF OUR SUPPLY CHAIN IS INTERRUPTED?

- You may consider leaving out or substituting ingredients or changing your process.
  - When substituting ingredients, be aware of allergens in new ingredients.
- Any change should be followed with a review of your food safety management plan.

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

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