



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 or chills, cough, shortness of breath, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting and diarrhea. 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. The risk for severe illness from COVID-19 increases with age, with older adults at highest 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 6 feet for a total of 15 minutes or longer in a 24-hour period) through respiratory droplets when an infected person coughs or sneezes. It may be possible that people can get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching their own mouths, noses or possibly their eyes, but this is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads. The best way to protect yourself and to help reduce the spread of the virus that causes COVID-19 is to limit your interactions with other people as much as possible and take precautions to prevent getting COVID-19 when you do interact with others. Those steps include wearing a face covering, maintaining social distance of 6 feet and washing your hands frequently. If you start feeling sick and think you may have COVID-19, get in touch with your health care provider within 24 hours.

FOR FOOD REGULATORS AND THE FOOD INDUSTRY

On Sept. 26, 2020, Gov. Eric J. Holcomb's [Executive Order 20-43](#) became effective, signaling that all Indiana counties could move to Stage 5. Some jurisdictions remain more restrictive. Click [here](#) to learn more about Stage 5.

During Stage 5, every individual in Indiana must wear a face covering over the nose and mouth when inside businesses, public buildings or other indoor places open to the public. This also applies to outside spaces wherever it is not feasible to maintain 6 feet of social distancing from another person not in the same household. Face coverings also must be used for public transportation (i.e., taxi, private car service or a ride-sharing vehicle).

Food industry businesses shall implement and reevaluate measures already in place to ensure a safe environment for employees, customers, clients and members. The business plan should be posted publicly and include:

- Screening employees for COVID-19 symptoms before being allowed to work
- Enhancing cleaning and disinfecting process to include high-touch surfaces
- Enhancing hand washing or personal hygiene measures such as using hand sanitizer
- Adhering to social distancing of at least 6 feet apart and/or using other separation measures, such as physical barriers

Restaurants, bars, taverns, nightclubs and other establishments providing in-person food and drink service no longer have capacity limits but do have these following requirements:

- All patrons must remain seated while consuming food/drink or when otherwise remaining on the premises.



- Seating must be arranged and maintained so that individuals, households or parties are spaced at least 6 feet apart from any other individuals, households or parties.
- Self-service beverage stations are permitted, and self-service food stations (buffets, salad bars, etc.) are permitted but not recommended unless a staff member serves patrons.

The 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. The food industry should be prepared to change business practices, if needed, to maintain critical operations.

COVID-19 information is rapidly evolving, and this document is subject to change.

CAN COVID-19 BE SPREAD THROUGH FOOD OR FRESH PRODUCE?

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the state department of health 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 items to the right temperature and refrigerate foods promptly) when handling or preparing foods.

It's critical for consumers to adhere to food safety guidance when selecting produce. We encourage consumers to wash their hands, and wash and prepare their produce following [FDA recommendations](#).

Farmers markets are considered essential and are permitted to continue operations under the executive order. Operators are encouraged to follow the CDC's guidance for social distancing of 6 feet.

FOOD EMPLOYEE HEALTH AND HYGIENE

Educate food employees about the symptoms of COVID-19, which include fever or chills, cough, shortness of breath, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting and diarrhea. Educate employees about good respiratory hygiene to include washing hands, covering coughs and sneezes, and avoiding touching the face, nose or mouth. Follow CDC guidelines about home isolation for food employees who have tested positive for COVID-19 cases, are symptomatic contacts or have respiratory symptoms. All food employees should monitor themselves for the symptoms listed above. Food employees should notify management of symptoms, exposure to COVID-19 cases or if they were diagnosed with COVID-19.

- Promptly separate employees experiencing acute respiratory illness symptoms from other employees and send them home immediately. They should only return to work when no longer experiencing symptoms.
- Food employees who have or think they have COVID-19 will follow the [CDC's home isolation guidelines](#).

Currently, there are no approved vaccines or antiviral drugs for COVID-19. Employees who are symptomatic, are contacts of positive cases or were around people with respiratory infections should immediately contact a health professional for instructions.

Public health officials also say that asymptomatic infections are highly probable and asymptomatic individuals may still be actively shedding the virus. Therefore, practicing social distancing, good sanitization of food contact surfaces and disinfection of high-touch surfaces are important.



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

Ensure that food employees also practice social distancing of at least 6 feet between individuals. Face coverings shall be worn in food facilities as a public health measure.

All food businesses should ensure that sick policies are up-to-date, flexible and non-punitive to allow sick employees to stay home and care for themselves, children or other family members. Reinforce key messages to all employees regularly (stay home when sick, use cough and sneeze etiquette and practice good hand hygiene), and place posters where they are likely to be seen.

Food contact surfaces should continue to be cleaned and sanitized as before, using hot water or chemical sanitizers that have already been approved for use. High-touch surfaces (doorknobs, light switches, sinks, toilets, etc.) that are not food contact surfaces can be cleaned and disinfected with disinfectants the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) recommends in the proportions stated on the label. 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. Maintain adequate supplies of gloves, hand soap and hand sanitizers, sanitizers and disinfectants, and other personal protective equipment.

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

If a customer or employee vomits or has diarrhea, implement the same protocols used for Norovirus. 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 an incident.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE FOOD PROGRAM AVAILABILITY

The USDA is monitoring the COVID-19 situation closely in collaboration with federal and state partners. The USDA Food and Nutrition Service programs are ready to assist in the governmentwide effort to ensure all Americans have access to food in times of need. In the event of an emergency or disaster situation, Food and Nutrition Service programs are just one part of a much larger governmentwide coordinated response. All programs, including Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP); Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) and the School Breakfast and National School Lunch programs, have flexibilities and contingencies built -in to allow the response to on-the-ground realities and act as directed by Congress.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Additional information and resources for COVID-19 are available at the links below.

CDC

- CDC COVID-19 webpage: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus>.
- CDC guidelines for COVID-19 cases, contacts or when exhibiting respiratory symptoms: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/steps-when-sick.html>.
- For public health inspector supervisors: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/ph-inspectors-employers.html>.
- For public health inspectors: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/ph->



[inspectors-employees.html](#).

- Interim guidance for businesses and employers: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/guidance-business-response.html>.
- Resuming business toolkit: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/resuming-business-toolkit.html>.

EPA

- U.S. EPA Registered Antimicrobial Products for Use Against Novel Coronavirus SARS-CoV-2, the Cause of COVID-19: <https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2>

FDA

- 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>.
- FDA Best Practices for Retail Food Facilities: <https://www.fda.gov/food/food-safety-during-emergencies/best-practices-retail-food-stores-restaurants-and-food-pick-up-delivery-services-during-covid-19>.

USDA

- USDA COVID-19 webpage: <https://www.usda.gov/coronavirus>.

INDIANA

- ISDH COVID-19 webpage: <https://coronavirus.in.gov>.
- ISDH Guidance for Essential Businesses: <https://www.coronavirus.in.gov/2496.htm>.
- ISDH Cleaning Guidance for Businesses: https://www.coronavirus.in.gov/files/IN_COVID-19_Cleaning%20Guidance%20for%20Businesses_04.14.20.pdf
- Purdue Extension Farmers' Market Guide to COVID-19: <https://extension.purdue.edu/article/36616>
- Workplace complaints related to COVID-19: <https://www.in.gov/dol/3144.htm>