

Health Update: Coronavirus & Food Safety

Can you get COVID-19 from Food?

Cathy Moir, Australian Food Council Chair, says, 'The good news is that Food Standards Australia New Zealand states that there is **no international evidence so far that the virus causing COVID-19 is transmitted through eating food**. Spread of respiratory droplets from person to person and close personal contact are known to be the most common ways to spread coronavirus. Touching surfaces and objects and then your eyes, nose or mouth may also be a way to transfer the virus.'

It is important to **stay at home** as much as possible, while increasing numbers of people are being required to home isolate for 14 days or more. **One person** should go out and buy food periodically– possibly buying up and preparing a little extra food to last 2 weeks.

Main COVID-19/ Food Safety advice

1. Prevent COVID-19 spread while shopping for food.
2. Keep your food safe and prevent food poisoning at home.
3. The elderly and those with compromised immunity are at greatest risk from both COVID-19 as well as food poisoning.



Six COVID-19 Shopping Safety Tips

1. Follow the instructions provided by your supermarket or food retailer about **hand hygiene and social distancing** to protect yourself and others.
2. **Wipe trolley handles** with sanitizer when you enter the store.
3. Don't put unpackaged fresh fruit and veg directly into your trolley but **use the plastic bags** provided for your fresh produce.
4. **Don't handle produce items** and put them back for others or taste test the grapes as you touch your mouth with your hands.
5. Shopping bags should not be placed on any food preparation benches to **prevent contamination**.
6. **Wash your hands immediately when you return home** from shopping and again after putting away groceries.

Four COVID-19 Home Delivery Food Safety Tips

1. These deliveries can offer some protection by **reducing contact** with others.
2. There is **no evidence** to date that coronavirus has been transferred by food packaging whether for groceries or Take away.
3. Wash your hands after handling the delivery.
4. Make sure hot food, or food that needs refrigeration or freezing isn't left more than an hour on the doorstep.



Eight COVID-19 General Food Safety Tips

1. **If you are ill.** Do not prepare food for other people if you are unwell, with a respiratory illness or gastro, as you risk passing the illness on to them. Cover all coughs and sneezes so you don't contaminate the kitchen environment and food. Wash hands regularly and clean benches and utensils. If you are the only available cook, eg a single parent, cook a frozen meal or something simple that requires minimal handling, or order a home delivered takeaway.
2. **Fresh produce.** Fresh fruit and vegetables should be washed under running water before you eat them. Don't use hand sanitizer or body soap to clean produce as these may contain chemicals you don't want to consume (and it will taste nasty!) if you grow your own food, don't water it with 'grey' water from washing machines, baths, showers or handwashing.
3. **Storing food and date labels.** Food must be used or frozen by its use by date. Check any storage instructions on packaging such as "store under 4°C", "keep frozen" or "use within 3 days of opening package". Food can still be sold or eaten after its best before date but may have lost some nutrition or quality. Put newly purchased items at the back of the pantry shelf or fridge so you use older items first. If you and the kids are stuck at home you might want to tidy out the pantry, freezer and fridge and see who can find the most out of date item!
4. **Cooking.** You can bulk cook soups, casseroles and stews for freezing. If you do this divide the food into small containers like take away containers so that it cools faster, label with the date, and refrigerate or freeze. Don't let the food cool to room temperature as bacteria can grow and dangerous toxins can form. Use any refrigerated food within 2 to 3 days or freeze it. If you are new to cooking, especially while you are home more, try simple dishes at first and follow the recipe.



5. Refreezing food. You can defrost food to cook into a dish and then refreeze the dish. You can usually find out how long various foods will last in the freezer from information on the lid or door of your freezer.

6. Don't take food poisoning risks. Reduce your risk of food poisoning by always washing your hands, chopping boards and utensils after handling raw meat, raw poultry and egg shells. Use a meat thermometer to cook riskier foods such as sausages, hamburgers, rolled roasts, minced meat and leftovers to 75°C in the centre.

7. Eggs are nutritious and convenient but raw or slightly cooked egg dishes such as mayonnaise, eggnog, health shakes, steak tartare and mousses are a food poisoning risk and best avoided.

8. Use a fridge thermometer to check your fridge is always running at 5°C or below. If you don't have a meat or fridge thermometer order one in the [OSCAR online Shop](#).



*Stay
Safe!*

Resources & further information:

Australian Government COVID-19

CSIRO COVID-19

FSANZ COVID-19 and food



By Rose Livingston, OSCAR Care Group

Reduce your risk of coronavirus

✎ **WASH** your hands often with soap and running water, for at least 20 seconds. Dry with paper towel or hand dryer.

✎ **TRY** not to touch your eyes, nose or mouth.

✎ **COVER** your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. If you don't have a tissue cough or sneeze into your upper sleeve or elbow.

✎ **STAY** at home if you feel sick. If you take medication make sure you have enough.

✎ **PHONE** your doctor or the hotline – **1800 675 398** – if you need medical attention. They will tell you what to do.

✎ **CONTINUE** healthy habits: exercise, drink water, get plenty of sleep.

Wearing a mask is now recommended, and is required in Victoria.

✎ **BUY** an alcohol-based hand sanitiser with over 60% alcohol.



Find out more

www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/coronavirus

If you are concerned, call the

Coronavirus hotline 1800 675 398 (24 hours)

Please keep Triple Zero (000) for emergencies only

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