



Food has not been identified as a likely source of COVID-19 infection at this time. However, it is important to follow current food safety standards to help protect food workers and customers from COVID-19. In addition, expanding your current food safety practices will help slow the spread of respiratory viruses in the community and help reduce working days lost due to illness.

Review Employee Health Policies and Procedures

Be sure your employee health policies prohibit food workers from working in food establishments when sick.

- Talk with your workers about employee health requirements and expectations. Retrain your employees as needed to make sure everyone is aware of symptoms to monitor and how to notify you if they are sick and unable to work.
- Workers that are possibly sick with the symptoms matching COVID-19 should stay home. If possible, employees with family members/caregivers with symptoms matching COVID-19 should also stay home. Signs and symptoms of infection with COVID-19 include fever (100.4°F or greater, as measured with an oral thermometer), cough, and difficulty breathing. Symptoms of COVID-19 may appear in as few as 2 days or as long as 14 days after exposure to the virus.
- Food workers and managers suspected of illness should not return to work until they are symptom-free. Current guidance is to stay home until at least 72 hours after symptoms have gone away. This may be altered by medical diagnosis, local health authority, changing conditions, or other factors.
- Per CDC guidelines, employers are not encouraged to require employees to provide a doctor's note before returning to work, because doing so will burden the medical system.
- For the latest information, visit the following site: srhd.org/covid19

Increase Hand Hygiene

Be sure all employees wash their hands thoroughly and often.

- Make sure all employees wash their hands frequently and thoroughly with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Make sure each handwashing station is always stocked with soap, paper towels, and warm, running water. Please note: you may notice your sinks in public restrooms need to be stocked more frequently as customers are also increasing handwashing.
- Use a barrier such as tongs, gloves, or other utensil to prevent direct hand contact with ready to eat food.
- All employees should cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue. If a tissue is not available, employees can sneeze into their shirt sleeve, but should NOT sneeze or cough into their hands. Discard tissues and wash hands immediately with soap and water after each cough or sneeze.
- Remind employees to avoid touching eyes, nose, and mouth to help slow the spread of germs. The current food safety rule requires workers wash their hands whenever they touch their eyes, nose, or mouth.
- Consider providing customers with tissues, no-touch waste bins, and alcohol-based hand antiseptic rubs (with at least 60% ethyl alcohol as the active ingredient) in customer areas.

Clean and Sanitize

Be sure to clean and sanitize using an EPA approved sanitizer.

- It is expected that the coronavirus that causes COVID-19 is, like other coronaviruses, susceptible to EPA-registered sanitizers and disinfectants. As of now, there is no recommended change to currently approved sanitizers.
- EPA has a [list of registered sanitizers](#) labeled for use against the novel coronavirus. Note: There may be additional disinfectants that meet the criteria and EPA will update the list as needed. If you have questions about your particular sanitizer, please read the package label carefully or contact your chemical provider for more information.
- When disinfecting for coronavirus, EPA recommends following the product label. Use directions for enveloped viruses, as indicated by the approved emerging viral pathogen claim on the master label. If the directions for use for viruses/virucidal activity list different contact times or dilutions, use the longest contact time or most concentrated solution.
- Note: These disinfection concentrations may exceed the levels allowed for use on food contact surfaces, such as dishes and utensils. When using the chemical, be sure to follow the label directions for food contact services.
- All food contact surfaces such as utensils, cutting boards, and serving ware must be washed, rinsed, and sanitized (either with chemical sanitizer or high-temperature dish machine) often throughout the day. Be sure dishes are properly washed with chemicals or a high-heat dishwasher after each customer's use.
- Only use sanitizers registered with EPA as a sanitizer. Read the sanitizer label and follow usage directions. Be sure to measure the concentration of the sanitizer with test strips to make sure the active ingredient is available.
- All nonfood contact surfaces, such as equipment, counters, and doors should be washed, rinsed, and sanitized throughout the day.
- Sanitize frequently touched surfaces, such as the outside of condiment containers, doorknobs, backs of chairs, faucet handles, tabletops, and menus often throughout the day.
- To help protect your workers and customers, increase the frequency of cleaning and sanitizing customer-access areas. Use a separate wiping cloth and sanitizing solution when sanitizing the front of house/customer-access areas.
- Consider removing decorative objects, papers, and other unneeded materials from counters to allow for thorough sanitization of unobstructed surfaces.
- Actively monitor salad bars, buffets and other self-service areas. Wash, rinse, and sanitize tongs and other utensils in self-service areas often throughout the day.

Additional Information

[Novel Coronavirus Outbreak 2020](#), Washington State Department of Health

[Coronavirus Disease 2019](#), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

[Coronavirus and Pandemic Preparedness for the Food Industry](#), FMI Food Industry Association

[Coronavirus: What Can You Do?](#) National Restaurant Association

[Interim Guidance for Business and Employers to Plan and Respond to COVID-19](#), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

[Getting Your Workplace Ready for COVID-19](#), World Health Organization

[Guidance for Travelers](#), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

[Food Worker and Food Establishment Guidance](#), Washington State Department of Health

