

### 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 or difficulty breathing, 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.

### 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 about 6 feet) through respiratory droplets when an infected person coughs or sneezes. It may be possible that a person can get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose, or possibly their eyes, but this is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads.

### FOR FOOD REGULATORS AND FOOD INDUSTRY

On June 11, 2020, Gov. Eric J. Holcomb's [Executive Order 20-32](#) became effective and announced that all Indiana counties (except Cass, Lake, and Marion Counties) may transition to Stage 4. Other jurisdictions may have opted to be more restrictive. Details on what's open and what's closed in [Stage 4](#).

Food industry such as restaurants, other retail food establishments, and food manufacturing firms shall plan and then implement measures to ensure a safe environment for employees, customers, clients, and members. The plan should be posted publicly and include the following.

- An employee health screening process.
- Enhanced cleaning and disinfecting process to include high touch surfaces.
- Enhanced hand washing and personal hygiene measures.
- Compliance with employees adhering to social distancing of at least 6 feet apart. Employing other separation measures such as face coverings or using barriers to separate employees.

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. Food Industry should be prepared to change business practices, if needed, in order to maintain critical operations. Information is rapidly evolving in regards to COVID-19 and information in this document may be subject to change.

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

The CDC, FDA, and ISDH 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 to the right temperature, and refrigerate foods promptly) when handling or preparing foods.

As consumers select their produce, adhering to food safety guidance is critical. 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 Gov. Eric J. Holcomb's executive order. Specifically, the order designates "certified farmers markets" as essential businesses. Operators are encouraged to follow the CDC guidance for social distancing of six feet.

### FOOD EMPLOYEE HEALTH AND HYGIENE

Educate food employees on the symptoms of COVID-19 to include cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fever, chills, muscle pain, sore throat or new loss of taste or smell. Educate employees on good respiratory hygiene to include hand washing, covering coughs and sneezes, and avoid touching the face, nose, or mouth. Follow CDC guidelines on home isolation for food employees who are COVID-19 cases, contacts, or when exhibiting respiratory symptoms. When a food employee is positive for COVID-19, management should consult with the local health department or ISDH for guidance.

- All food employees should monitor for symptoms of cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fever, chills, muscle pain, sore throat or new loss of taste or smell. Food employees should notify management of symptoms, exposure to COVID-19 cases, or if they were diagnosed with COVID-19.
- Promptly separate employees who appear to be experiencing acute respiratory illness symptoms from other employees and send home immediately.
- COVID-19 cases will be excluded until 72 hours after fever has subsided (without use of a fever reducer), when other symptoms have improved (cough or shortness of breath), and at least **10** days after symptoms appeared.
- Food employees should stay at home when experiencing respiratory symptoms and should only return to work when they are no longer experiencing symptoms.

Currently, there are no approved vaccines or anti-viral drugs for COVID-19. Employees who have recently traveled in affected areas, are symptomatic, or were around people suffering from 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 is 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. The use of simple cloth face coverings as a public health measure can be utilized in food facilities. However, ensure that cloth face coverings are laundered and maintained in accordance with FDA regulations.

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 (to stay home when sick, use cough and sneeze etiquette, and practice hand hygiene), and place posters where they will be likely to be seen.

Food contact surfaces should continue to be cleaned and sanitized as before using hot water or chemical sanitizer that have already been approved for use. High touch point surfaces (door knobs, light switches, toilets, and sinks, etc.) that



are not food contact surfaces can be cleaned and disinfected with EPA recommended disinfectants 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 PPE. Order more if needed (without over-ordering).

### WHAT SHOULD BE DONE IN THE EVENT OF A BODY 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 government-wide 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 government-wide coordinated response. All programs, including SNAP, WIC and the National School Lunch and Breakfast Programs, have flexibilities and contingencies built-in to allow the response to on-the-ground realities and take action as directed by Congress.

### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

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

- 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>).
- 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 COVID-19 webpage: <https://www.usda.gov/coronavirus>
- ISDH COVID-19 webpage: <https://coronavirus.in.gov>; ISDH Guidance for Essential Businesses: [https://coronavirus.in.gov/files/IN\\_COVID-19\\_occupational%20guidance\\_R%204.15.20.pdf](https://coronavirus.in.gov/files/IN_COVID-19_occupational%20guidance_R%204.15.20.pdf). ISDH Cleaning Guidance for Businesses: [https://coronavirus.in.gov/files/IN\\_COVID-19\\_Cleaning%20Guidance%20for%20Businesses\\_04.14.20.pdf](https://coronavirus.in.gov/files/IN_COVID-19_Cleaning%20Guidance%20for%20Businesses_04.14.20.pdf).
- 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>
- 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>