



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, 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 about 6 feet for 15 minutes or longer) 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. 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 healthcare provider within 24 hours.

FOR FOOD REGULATORS AND FOOD INDUSTRY

On July 16, Gov. Eric J. Holcomb's [Executive Order 20-36](#) became effective and signaled that all Indiana counties except Elkhart county will continue in Stage 4.5. Other jurisdictions may have opted to be more restrictive. Click [here](#) for details on what's open and what's closed in Stage 4.5.

Food industry businesses 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:

- Employees must be screened for COVID-19 symptoms before being allowed to work.
- Implement an enhanced cleaning and disinfecting process to include high touch surfaces.
- Implement enhanced hand washing and personal hygiene measures.
- Adhere to social distancing of at least 6 feet apart and/or by employing other separation measures, such as physical barriers.

Restaurants including country clubs, social clubs and wineries that provide in-person full dining service are subject to the following requirements:

- In-person or on-premises dining is restricted to 75% of seating capacity in each dining area provided that each table, booth, or seating area is at least 6 feet apart. They may also be separated by a physical barrier.
- Self-service food stations (i.e. buffets, salad bars, etc.) are prohibited. Self-service beverage stations are permitted, but patrons may not use their own personal cup, mug or glass and refills are prohibited.



- Employees shall be screened for COVID-19 symptoms before being allowed to work and shall wear face coverings.
- Bar areas may be opened to 50% occupancy provided that social distancing can be achieved and maintained.
- Live music or entertainment is permitted.

Bars, taverns, wineries and breweries (without full dining or full menus) are subject to the following requirements:

- These facilities may open to 50% occupancy provided that social distancing can be achieved and maintained.
- Employees shall be screened for COVID-19 symptoms before being allowed to work and shall wear face coverings.

Other retail food establishments other than restaurants, such as convenience stores, gas stations, and grocery stores are subject to the following requirements:

- Self-service beverage stations are permitted, but patrons may not use their own personal cup, mug or glass and refills are prohibited.
- Self-service food stations providing unpackaged food (salad or olive bars, bulk items, hot dog rollers, etc.) are permitted as long as patrons use disposable tissues or single service utensils to collect the food.

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, to maintain critical operations.

COVID-19 information is rapidly evolving COVID-19, and this document is 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. 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, symptomatic contacts, or have respiratory symptoms. 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 experiencing acute respiratory illness symptoms from other employees and send home immediately. They should only return to work when no longer experiencing symptoms.
- COVID-19 cases will be excluded until 24 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.

Currently, there are no approved vaccines or anti-viral drugs for COVID-19. Employees who are symptomatic, contacts of positive cases, 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 face coverings as a public health measure can be utilized in food facilities.

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 personal protective equipment.

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://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
- 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>