



THE FACTS: Coronavirus and US Food Safety

Background:

COVID-19 is a respiratory disease that is caused by the novel Coronavirus, SARS-CoV-2. The disease has spread throughout the world and the World Health Organization (WHO) has officially determined this outbreak is a global pandemic. Common symptoms include high fever, sore throat, general malaise and weakness, cough, and shortness of breath. The incubation period is between 7-29 days. The most likely known route of transmission is from person to person. To date, the disease has disproportionately affected at-risk populations such as the elderly and immunocompromised individuals. While active efforts to develop a vaccine are in progress, it is important to recognize that there is no vaccine available today to protect the population.

FACTS: Following are Facts Related to Food Safety for Consumers During the Current Pandemic

Fact #1: The United States has one of the safest food supplies in the world.

Sources: [USDA Secretary/FDA Commissioner public statements](#)

Fact #2: There is no evidence that SARS-CoV-2 (the virus causing COVID-19) is transmitted through food or food packaging. Like other viruses, it is possible that the virus that causes COVID-19 can survive on surfaces or objects. For that reason, it is critical to follow the 4 key steps of food safety—clean, separate, cook, and chill.

Sources: <https://www.usda.gov/coronavirus>; <https://www.fda.gov/emergency-preparedness-and-response/mcm-issues/coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19-frequently-asked-questions>

Fact #3: COVID-19 is understood to be a respiratory disease that is primarily contracted through inhalation.

Sources: Coronavirus is a respiratory virus spread through respiratory droplets. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) does *not* consider COVID-19 to be a foodborne illness, but similar actions to prevent foodborne illness can be taken to mitigate the spread of COVID-19. The most important actions to take include proper handwashing using soap and water and scrubbing for at least 20 seconds, frequent cleaning and sanitation of touch points and staying home when sick or caring for someone who is sick. https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-cov/prepare/transmission.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fabout%2Ftransmission.html

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Fact #4: Even during this pandemic, US food systems continue to be held to the highest food safety and regulatory standards, which includes high levels of sanitation, food safety testing and monitoring in food processing and handling environments.

Source: <https://www.fda.gov/emergency-preparedness-and-response/mcm-issues/coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19-frequently-asked-questions>

Fact #5: The food industry's top priority is to provide safe foods for consumers. The entire food industry is dedicated to making sure that food products and food establishments remain safe and do not exacerbate existing risks associated with the current Coronavirus outbreak

Source: <https://www.usda.gov/coronavirus>

Fact #6: According to multiple public health agencies around the world, including [CDC](#), [WHO](#), [FDA](#) and [EFSA](#) coronaviruses are primarily spread from person-to-person through respiratory droplets NOT food.

Sources: CDC, WHO, FDA and EFSA; <https://www.usda.gov/coronavirus>;
<https://www.fda.gov/emergency-preparedness-and-response/mcm-issues/coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19-frequently-asked-questions>

Fact #7: Coronaviruses have poor survivability on surfaces; therefore, packages shipped over days and weeks at ambient, refrigerated, or frozen temperatures pose a very low risk of spreading the virus.

Sources: <https://www.usda.gov/coronavirus>

<https://www.fda.gov/emergency-preparedness-and-response/mcm-issues/coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19-frequently-asked-questions>

https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/cleaning-disinfection.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fcommunity%2Fhome%2Fcleaning-disinfection.html

Fact #8: The FDA and USDA, which oversee food safety standards and compliance, have regulations and systems in place to ensure for the highest levels of food safety at all times.

Source: <https://www.fda.gov/emergency-preparedness-and-response/mcm-issues/coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19-frequently-asked-questions>

Fact #9: Food companies and the FDA and USDA are working together during the Coronavirus outbreak to confirm that food safety systems are in place and that consumers can be confident that the food that they eat is safe.

Source: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/remarks-president-trump-vice-president-pence-members-coronavirus-task-force-press-briefing-2/>;
<https://www.usda.gov/coronavirus>

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Fact #10: At this time there is no indication that the Coronavirus can be transmitted through the packaging of food products.

Source: <https://www.usda.gov/coronavirus>

Fact #11: During times of ordinary business, and times of uncertainty, the US food systems continue to be held to the highest regulatory standards. Food companies are required by law (the Food Safety Modernization Act of 2010) to have documented comprehensive Food Safety Programs and follow Standard Operating Procedures focused on food safety.

Source: <https://www.usda.gov/coronavirus> ; <https://www.fda.gov/emergency-preparedness-and-response/mcm-issues/coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19-frequently-asked-questions>

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