

# Can I catch coronavirus from my shopping?

You or your support worker need to think about the risk of the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19) from contaminated packages and items.

- There is no evidence that COVID-19 is transmitted through food.
- Maintaining good hygiene practices is recommended.
- Anyone with suspected symptoms of respiratory illness should avoid preparing food for other people.

## Food preparation

- Fresh fruit and vegetables should be washed under running water before you eat them. Do not use hand sanitiser or body soap to clean produce as these may contain chemicals you do not want to consume.
- Meat, poultry and fish should be well cooked before consuming.
- 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 three days of opening package”.
- Put newly purchased items at the back of the pantry shelf or fridge so you use older items first.
- When cooking large quantity soups, casseroles and stews for freezing, divide the food into small containers like take away containers so that it cools faster. Label with the date and refrigerate or freeze. Do not let the food cool to room temperature as bacteria can grow and dangerous toxins can form. Use any refrigerated food within two to three days or freeze it.

## How coronavirus spreads

This can happen when a person comes into contact with the droplets of an infected person, for example through coughing or sneezing.

Spread of this coronavirus from person-to-person is usually between close contacts.

Spread of this coronavirus can also occur through touching objects or surfaces (such as door handles or tables, food packaging) contaminated from a cough or sneeze from a person with a confirmed infection, and then touching your mouth or face.

If you want more information, click this link [Coronavirus Frequently asked Questions](#).

## Spread of the virus on food packaging

There is currently no evidence available showing how long the virus will survive on a surface as it depends on what the surface is made from, such as wood, plastic or paper, and the environment, such as air temperature and humidity.

## Food and general shopping

Many people are choosing to wear disposable gloves when shopping but there is no evidence that wearing gloves for food or general shopping can reduce the likelihood of catching COVID-19 or other viruses. If you are wearing gloves and you touch a contaminated surface and then touch your face you have the same risk as not wearing the gloves. To prevent catching COVID-19, you should avoid touching your face and perform regular hand hygiene when shopping.

Follow the instructions provided by your supermarket or food retailer about hand hygiene and social distancing to protect yourself and others.

- Consider using supermarkets' free click and collect services to reduce possible transmission.
- Many supermarkets provide wipes to clean the trolley handles with when you enter the store.
- Do not put unpackaged fresh fruit and veg directly into your trolley but use the plastic bags provided for your fresh produce.
- Supermarkets are requesting that you pack your own bags to reduce the possibility of transmission.
- Do not handle produce items and put them back for others.

- When arriving home shopping bags should not be placed on any food preparation benches to prevent contamination.
- Wash your hands immediately when you return home from shopping and again after putting away groceries.

#### References

Australian Government Department of Health (2020). [Information for Employers.](#)

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. [Novel Coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)

Food Safety Information Council. (April 3, 2020). [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) and Food Safety. Your Questions Answered](#)

Food Standards Australia and New Zealand (April 2020). [Novel Coronavirus and Food Safety.](#)