

Re: Safety of Food and Food Packaging During COVID-19

Dear State Association Executive:

In the event you hear of concerns from a customer purchasing food that comes from a processing plant that has been closed due to COVID-19 or from a store who is concerned about selling such a product, we have compiled a FAQ with responses from both [FDA](#) and [USDA](#) on the safety of food and food packaging. Immediately following that are some FMI resources.

Q: Can I become sick with coronavirus (COVID-19) from food?

USDA Answer: We 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.

FDA Answer: Currently there is no evidence of food or food packaging being associated with transmission of COVID-19. Unlike foodborne gastrointestinal (GI) viruses like norovirus and hepatitis A that often make people ill through contaminated food, SARS-CoV-2, which causes COVID-19, is a virus that causes respiratory illness. Foodborne exposure to this virus is not known to be a route of transmission. The virus is thought to spread mainly from person-to-person. This includes between people who are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet), and through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes. These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby or possibly be inhaled into the lungs. 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 mouth, nose, or possibly their eyes, but this is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads. However, it's always critical to follow the 4 key steps of food safety—clean, separate, cook, and chill – to prevent foodborne illness.

Q: Are meat products compromised by the Coronavirus?

USDA Answer: We 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.

FMI Resources:

- FMI Blog: [What's Real About Coronavirus and Food Packaging](#)
- FMI Worker and Customer [COVID-19 Safety Toolkit](#)
- Dr. Ben Chapman, professor, food safety specialist, Department of Agricultural and Human Sciences, North Carolina State University [video on food packaging](#)