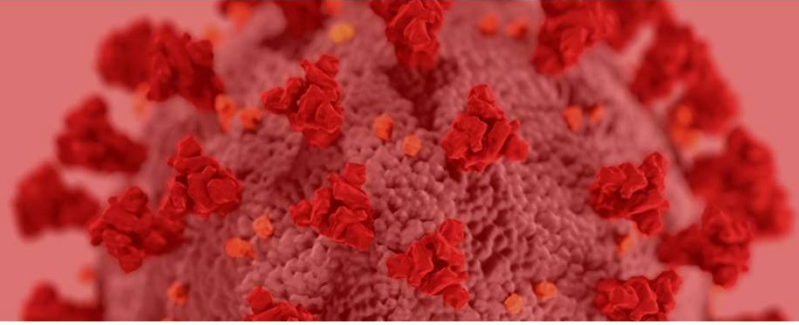


# Frequently Asked Questions



## **Q. Is the food supply safe?**

Currently there is no evidence of food or food packaging being associated with transmission of COVID-19. This has been confirmed by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets and the Centers for Disease Control (CDC).

## **Q. Is there anything that we in the industry can do to ensure that our employees and our customers stay safe?**

There are several actions that you can take: clean and sanitize all hard surfaces in your operation frequently; practice the four key steps of food safety (clean – separate – cook – chill); make sure employees wash and sanitize their hands after touching anything and everything; make sure that employees wear gloves and change them frequently; make sure that employees change uniforms and/or aprons frequently; place hand sanitizer stations in locations accessible to employees AND customers; practice contact-free transactions with customers; and inform your customers of the actions that your operation is taking.

## **Q. A worker in my operation has tested positive for COVID-19; what steps should I take to ensure that the foods produced in my operation remain safe?**

If an employee is confirmed to have COVID-19, employers should inform fellow employees of their possible exposure to COVID-19 in the workplace but maintain confidentiality. Employers should consult with the local health department for additional guidance. While the primary responsibility in this instance is to take appropriate actions to protect other workers and people who might have come in contact with the ill employee, facilities should re-double their cleaning and sanitation efforts to control any risks that might be associated with workers who are ill regardless of the type of virus or bacteria. For example, facilities are required to maintain clean and sanitized facilities and food contact surfaces.

## **Q. Are food operations affected by mass gathering restrictions?**

New York State has not restricted food producing farms, farmers' markets, grocery stores, retail food stores, food pantries, food banks, and food and beverage manufacturing facilities from being open. These operations are exempt under the mass gatherings guidance as essential food supply chain industries.

**Q. Should employees, such as baggers, cashiers and cleaning personnel in food service and food retail wear face masks to prevent exposure to COVID-19?**

CDC does not recommend that healthy people wear a facemask to protect themselves from respiratory diseases, including COVID-19. You should only wear a mask if a healthcare professional recommends it. A facemask should be used by people who have COVID-19 and are showing symptoms. This is to protect others from the risk of getting infected.

*NOTE: As of March 31, 2020, the CDC is considering altering this response to encourage people to take measures to cover their faces; however, this recommendation would still insist that surgical and N95 masks should still be reserved solely for use by medical personnel and first responders.*

**Q. How do I maintain social distancing in my food production/processing facility and food retail establishment where employees typically work within close distances?**

Because social distancing to the full 6 feet will not be possible in some food facilities, effective hygiene practices should be maintained to reduce the chance of spreading the virus.

**Q. Will my facility be inspected for food safety during this crisis?**

The FDA has enacted a temporary suspension of inspecting food manufacturing/processing and food warehouse/distribution operations; however, the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets will continue to perform all food safety, dairy and plant inspections.

The City of New York's Department of Health and Mental Hygiene has reduced its food service establishment inspections (unless a customer complaint has been filed); many of Nassau County's Departments and Agencies are working remotely; Suffolk County has not specifically announced any reductions or suspensions in its inspection program

**Q. What is the role of money in the spread of COVID-19?**

According to CDC, money is not likely a primary mode of transmission of coronavirus, however, it may be possible to transfer the virus by touching a contaminated surface and then touching the mouth, nose, or eyes. Customers and employees are encouraged to properly wash their hands often throughout the day, including after handling money, and always before they eat or touch their eyes, nose, and mouth. Employees should wear gloves when handling money, and dispose of the gloves once the transaction has been completed. A number of areas are also recommending cashless transactions through online purchases or POS terminals.

*Sources: FDA; USDA; CDC; NYS Dept of Ag & Market; NYCDHHS; NCDHS; SCDHS*