

Supporting Our Community: Tips for food safety when ordering takeout or delivery

Dining out at your favorite restaurant is not an option right now, but you can support them through takeout and delivery. Currently, there is no evidence to show that food will transfer COVID-19, and current research shows the risk of viruses being transferred to food packaging is very low. The greatest risk of contracting the virus is from people who have the virus. The law requires restaurants to train their employees in food safety and sanitation to keep consumers safe. You can reduce your risk by following appropriate recommendations at home, as well.

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC), Food and Drug Administration (FDA), United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), National Restaurant Association (NRA), and local health departments all made the same recommendations for staying healthy.

If you decide to order takeout or delivery, follow these guidelines.

- Order from restaurants you trust. Health department scores are available on the internet and can inform you of your choice's cleanliness. You can also call the restaurant to ask them what other precautions they are taking.
- Choose direct pickup over restaurant delivery. Try to pick up your food after peak hours to avoid crowds. Practice social distancing by standing at least 6 feet away from others, and wear disposable gloves when picking up your order. Put the gloves on before going into the restaurant or accepting a delivery. Take them off after sanitizing your credit card, if needed, and before driving away.
- Many food delivery options are available in metropolitan areas and some have rolled out no-contact delivery. You pay, tip, and pick up your delivered food at the door.
- Whether you pick up or choose delivery, use gloves to handle the packaging, or wipe the packaging with a sanitizing wipe. Throw away the packaging immediately, and wash your hands before eating!
- Serve the food in individual plates or bowls; don't share out of the container. Use your own utensils. Save leftovers in your own packaging. Wash your table and hands after eating!

You should follow these recommendations at home.

- Wash your hands (at least 20 seconds with warm soap and water).
- Use an alcohol-based sanitizer (at least 60% alcohol).
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- If you cough or sneeze, cover your mouth or nose, immediately discard used tissues, and wash your hands.
- If you are sick, stay home.
- Clean and disinfect objects and surfaces that have been touched regularly (doorknobs, light fixtures, sink and toilet fixtures, phone, table surfaces, etc.).

Resources:

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Coronavirus (COVID-19), www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov
- National Restaurant Association, Coronavirus, What You Can Do, https://foodsafetyfocus.com/FoodSafetyFocus/media/Library/pdfs/Coronavirus_2019-nCoV_Info_TipsforRestaurants.pdf
- Medical News Today, What to Know About Coronaviruses, <https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/256521>

Source:

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