



# 10 THINGS

## consumers should know about food safety and COVID-19

FAO food safety experts explain what is known so far about **COVID-19 and food**, offering advice for when you go food shopping

### 1 Currently there is no evidence that the new coronavirus that causes COVID-19 can be transmitted by food

The virus is transmitted primarily by people who are infected coughing and sneezing droplets which are then picked up by another person. Though the droplets can land on objects and surfaces, it is not known if this amount of contamination is enough to make a person sick from food.



### 2 Coronavirus cannot grow on food

While bacteria under the right conditions can grow on food, a virus such as the one that causes COVID-19 requires a living host in order to survive and multiply.

### 3 The best way to avoid COVID-19 is through good hygiene habits

Always wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds after shopping, before handling food and eating and after using the bathroom. And practice respiratory hygiene.



### 4 Cooking food to the right temperature is always a good way to prevent getting sick

Heating your food to the temperatures required to kill pathogens (70°C for 2 minutes or equivalent) will decrease the risk of getting any foodborne illness, including those caused by viruses. While there are no studies on the effect of cooking on this particular virus, other coronaviruses are destroyed at these temperatures.



### 5 It is safe to eat raw fruit and vegetables

Currently, there is no evidence to support transmission of COVID-19 associated with food. Thoroughly wash your fruit and vegetables with clean water, not with soap or other product, before you peel, cut or eat them.



### 6 Handling food packaging is an unlikely cause of COVID-19

Under experimental conditions the virus can survive on a variety of surfaces such as plastic or cardboard used in packaging, but it is unlikely that this type of exposure would be sufficient to make a person sick. Always wash your hands after unpacking food, wipe down and disinfect surfaces and avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth when handling food and food packages.



### 7 Good habits when out shopping

Follow the measures put in place locally, maintain physical distance from other people when selecting food items and in line. Keep hands clean and do not shop if you have any symptoms.

### 8 Thank retailers for providing access to food and keeping it safe

The world is relying on food vendors for continued access to and the safety of our food supply. These workers are critical in the pandemic response, need to stay healthy and protect the food from contamination.



### 9 Support food safety efforts in the agriculture supply chain

To protect food from the farm to the store during the COVID-19 pandemic, agricultural personnel should be considered essential. By protecting their workers food producers are ensuring a safer food supply.



### 10 Do all of the above and wash your hands (again)

Simple as it sounds, hand washing with soap makes a real difference.