

### CAN COVID-19 BE PASSED ON THROUGH FOOD?

There is no evidence to suggest that COVID-19 is passed on through food. The main risk of transmission is from close contact with infected people. The advice to food businesses and consumers is to maintain good hygiene practices and to wash your hands regularly.

### HOW IS COVID-19 PASSED ON?

The virus is commonly passed on:

- directly, through contact with an infected person's body fluids (for example, droplets from coughing or sneezing)
- indirectly, through contact with surfaces that an infected person has coughed or sneezed on

Current information suggests that the virus could survive up to 72 hours (3 days) on hard surfaces depending on the material. However, the numbers of virus will reduce considerably over that time as it dies off. Simple household disinfectants can kill it.

### WHAT CAN FOOD WORKERS DO TO PREVENT THE SPREAD OF COVID-19?

Staff should not work if they have any of the symptoms of COVID-19. Should an infected worker handle food it is possible that they could introduce virus onto surfaces within the food business, by coughing and sneezing, or through hand contact. Staff should always practice good personal hygiene practices.

These include:

- proper hand hygiene
- safe food practices
- avoiding close contact with anyone showing symptoms of respiratory illness such as coughing and sneezing
- social distancing

### IS HANDWASHING IMPORTANT?

Yes, handwashing is extremely important. Food workers must wash hands:

- before starting work
- after coughing, sneezing or blowing nose
- before handling cooked or ready-to-eat food
- after handling or preparing raw food
- after handling waste
- after cleaning duties
- after using the toilet
- after eating, drinking or smoking
- after handling money
- generally, on a regular basis

## DO FOOD WORKERS NEED TO WEAR GLOVES?

No. It is acceptable to prepare and handle food with bare hands provided proper hand washing procedures are in place.

Gloves may be used by food workers, but they must ensure that the gloves are changed frequently and that hands are washed before putting gloves on, between glove changes and when gloves are removed. Contaminated gloves can spread germs to your hands when removing the gloves.

Gloves must be changed after carrying out non-food related activities such as opening/closing doors by hand, emptying bins, handling money, etc.

Food workers should be aware that wearing gloves can allow bacteria to build up on the surface of the hands, so hand washing is extremely important when gloves are removed to avoid subsequent contamination of food.

## WHAT EXTRA MEASURES CAN FOOD BUSINESS TAKE?

Social distancing should be implemented to help slow the spread of COVID-19. This involves maintaining a distance of 1.5 metres between people and reducing close social interactions.

Food businesses offering takeaway and home deliveries should implement ways to reduce risk. Here are a few examples:

- Limit the number of people who can come into your food business / supermarket / market stall etc. at any one time especially if space is limited at the entrance of your shop.
- Use spacing measures (e.g. floor markers) at tills or queues, if possible
- Have signage on the door informing the number of people allowed in at any one time.
- Home deliveries: take food to the door and remove from hot bag/esky so no there is no contact
- Use an app or smartphone for delivery details and transactions or
- Use the old-fashioned way by leaving a note on the door that shows where to drop off deliveries

## GENERAL

Avoid handling money and encourage the use of contactless payments. If food workers must handle money, it is important to wash hands with hand sanitiser or water and soap afterwards, and always before handling food.

Some food businesses have ceased using 'keep' cups/containers as an extra precautionary measure and are just using disposable drinking containers.

Hand sanitisers should be provided by businesses where possible.

Touch points e.g. EFPOS keypads, door handles etc., should be cleaned more frequently.

Keep doors open where possible to minimise contact.

Keep delivery vehicles clean

Keep hot bags, eskies, and ice bricks clean and sanitised

Ensure food is delivered promptly and within correct temperatures to ensure food safety

Avoid leaving chairs in the waiting area as these will need to be cleaned and sanitised regularly

The public can stay up to date on COVID-19 via the Department of Health website at [www.health.gov.au](http://www.health.gov.au) or HealthyWA website at [www.healthywa.wa.gov.au](http://www.healthywa.wa.gov.au)

***We are all in this together so let's do what we need to stop the spread and stay safe***