

Food Facts

Food safety tips for takeaway and food delivery



How is COVID-19 passed on?

There is no evidence to suggest 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.

The virus is commonly passed on:

- Directly, through contact with an infected person's body fluids (such as droplets from coughing or sneezing).
- Indirectly, through contact with surfaces an infected person has coughed or sneezed on.

Current information suggests the virus can survive up to 72 hours (three days) on hard surfaces, depending on the material. However simple household disinfectants are able to kill it.

What can food workers do to prevent the spread of COVID-19?

Staff should not go to work if they have any of the symptoms of COVID-19. It is possible an infected worker could introduce the virus onto surfaces within the food business by coughing and sneezing, or through hand contact.

Staff should always practice good personal hygiene. This includes:

- Proper hand hygiene, including washing hands thoroughly for at least 20 seconds with soap and water or using hand sanitiser.
- Safe food practices.

- Avoiding close contact with anyone showing symptoms of respiratory illness such as coughing or sneezing.
- Social distancing.

Is handwashing important?

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

- Before starting work.
- After coughing, sneezing or blowing their 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 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 you remove the gloves.

Gloves must be changed after carrying out non-food related activities, such as opening and 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 businesses 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 of how you can do this:

- 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 a sign on the door listing the number of people allowed in at any one time.
- For home deliveries, take food to the door and remove it from hot bag/esky so no there is no contact.
- Use an app or smartphone for delivery details and transactions.
- Use the old-fashioned method of leaving a note on the door that tells people 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 stopped using keep cups and containers as an extra precaution and are just using disposable drinking containers.
- Hand sanitiser should be provided by businesses where possible.
- High touch points such as EFTPOS keypads, pens and door handles should be cleaned more frequently.
- Keep doors open where possible to minimise contact; and 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 health.gov.au or HealthyWA website at healthywa.wa.gov.au

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

City of Bayswater

61 Broun Avenue, Morley WA 6062 | PO Box 467, Morley WA 6943

P: 9272 0622 | F: 9272 0665 | TTY: 9371 8493

mail@bayswater.wa.gov.au | www.bayswater.wa.gov.au

 facebook.com/bayswatercity

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