

# Food and COVID-19

## Tips for shopping and handling food safely

There's no evidence so far that COVID-19 can be passed on by food or food packaging. The virus is passed on mainly through person-to-person contact or direct contact with droplets coughed or sneezed into the air by infected people. But it's still important to handle food safely to prevent COVID-19 spread.

### Wash and dry hands carefully to reduce COVID-19 spread

- ✓ Wash hands often with soap and running water for 20 seconds. Liquid soap and bar soap are both fine.
- ✓ Use alcohol gel if handwashing isn't possible.
- ✓ Dry hands for 20 seconds. Use a paper towel or an electric hand dryer in public washrooms.
- ✓ At home use a clean, dry towel. Replace damp towels frequently.



Soap helps remove viruses and bacteria. Running water helps wash dirt, viruses and bacteria away.

Dry hands are less likely to pick up viruses and bacteria.

### Food shopping

- ✓ Make a list of what you need so you spend less time in the store.
- ✓ Make sure hands are clean and dry.
- ✓ Wipe trolley handles and baskets with sanitiser or wipes when entering the store.
- ✓ Avoid touching your face.
- ✗ Don't handle vegetables or fruits and then put them back.
- ✓ Maintain physical distancing around other shoppers and staff as much as possible e.g. waiting at the checkout or walking around the store.
- ✓ Minimise shopping trips. Shop in off-peak times to avoid crowds.



Coronaviruses can remain on hard surfaces such as steel and plastic for a few hours or up to several days.

Maintain physical distancing, stay at least **1.5 metres** away from others.

## Handling food at home

- ✗ Don't put shopping bags on kitchen benches where you prepare food.
- ✓ Wash hands as soon as you return home from shopping and again after putting away groceries.
- ✓ Always cough or sneeze into a tissue or your elbow to prevent contaminating the area or the food while you're in the kitchen.
- ✓ Clean/disinfect food preparation areas often, as well as surfaces which are frequently touched, e.g. cupboard/door handles, tables, microwave, fridge doors and taps.



## Home deliveries and take away food

- ✓ Having food delivered to your home gives some protection by reducing contact with other people.
- ✓ Always wash hands carefully after handling the delivery.



**There's no evidence so far that the coronavirus is passed on by food packaging from groceries or takeaway food but washing hands after handling things touched by other people is a healthy habit.**

## Drinking water

- ✓ It's safe to drink tap water in Australia.
- ✓ It's also safe to drink from fountains and bubblers in public spaces, such as parks but *avoid placing your mouth or lips directly on the fountain or bubbler.*
- ✓ Avoid touching the surfaces; wash hands soon after or use hand sanitiser.



**There's no evidence that people can catch COVID-19 from drinking water. But taps and push buttons of drinking water fountains or bubblers can carry germs from other users.**

**For more information visit: [www.health.nsw.gov.au](http://www.health.nsw.gov.au)**

## REMIND YOURSELF

# Together we can all remain safe



**Health**  
South Western Sydney  
Local Health District

## MYTHS & FACTS about preventing COVID-19

**Myth:** *Wearing gloves while shopping or handling food keeps me safe.*

**Fact:** Wearing gloves can allow germs to build up on the hands. Wash hands immediately after removing gloves to avoid contaminating food. Thorough handwashing gives better protection than disposable gloves.

**Myth:** *Saltwater, garlic, vitamins or alcoholic drinks are 'wonder foods' that can cure or prevent the coronavirus.*

**Fact:** There's no evidence so far that any of these things cure or prevent the virus.

**Myth:** *Adding two to three drops of bleach to the water when washing fruit and vegetables kills the virus.*

**Fact:** Cleaning products like bleach, soap, disinfectant or detergents contain chemicals that can be harmful if we consume them. Use only running water to clean fruit and vegetables, rubbing them with your hands under water.

## References

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4. Harmful coronavirus myths are being spread in Australia's Multicultural Communities. SBS News <https://www.sbs.com.au/news/harmful-coronavirus-myths-are-being-spread-in-australia-s-multicultural-communities>