

NOVEL CORONAVIRUS DISEASE 2019 (COVID-19)

# School Food Service Safety Precautions

*for*

SCHOOL NUTRITION PROGRAMS



CENTER FOR  
ECOLITERACY



LunchAssist

©LunchAssist 2020



NOVEL CORONAVIRUS DISEASE 2019 (COVID-19)  
Food Service Safety Precautions  
*for*  
School Nutrition Programs

A collaborative resource from LunchAssist and the Center for Ecoliteracy  
based on an informal review of evidence as of April 7, 2020.

**Developed by:**

Jennifer McNeil, RDN, SNS, LunchAssist  
Mickinzie Lopez, MS, RDN, SNS, LunchAssist  
Leyla Marandi, MPH, Center for Ecoliteracy

**Technical Advisor:**

Heather Readhead, MD, MPH, UC Berkeley

**Dedicated to:**

The school nutrition professionals who are serving children during the COVID-19 outbreak.

©LunchAssist 2020

## Disclaimer

---

These unofficial recommendations attempt to provide best practice food safety recommendations for school nutrition professionals during the COVID-19 outbreak. Our aim is to provide preliminary information for school nutrition professionals during a time when specific guidance on this topic is not available from USDA or other regulatory authorities.

Every day we learn more about the prevalence of the virus in our communities, and additional precautions may protect school nutrition teams and the families they serve during this period of uncertainty. To maximize safety, these guidelines operate under a conservative assumption that all people, including those with whom we are dealing directly AND anyone they come into contact with, could be potential carriers of the virus.

This resource was developed after a careful review of existing guidance from the sources listed in the reference section, available as of April 7, 2020. We welcome feedback for improvements from regulatory authorities, government agencies, universities, health professionals, scientists, and other groups informed with expertise on this subject.

Due to the rapidly-evolving nature of COVID-19, we cannot and do not guarantee, or make any representations or warranties concerning, the accuracy of any information contained within this document. Readers are encouraged to do their own inquiry and due diligence, and to confirm the information shared in this document with other reputable sources. This document is for general informational purposes only and we encourage readers to seek advice from public health and other regulatory authorities. If you are having a medical emergency, please dial 911 or call for emergency medical assistance. LunchAssist, the Center for Ecoliteracy, the authors, and advisor, will not be liable for any direct, indirect, consequential, or other damages. Any application of the material provided is at the reader's discretion and is the sole responsibility of that person.

## Table of Contents

---

<b>Disclaimer</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Frequently Asked Questions: Novel Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)</b>	<b>5</b>
What is COVID-19?	5
How does it spread?	5
Does it spread through food?	5
How long does it live on surfaces?	5
How can we prevent the spread?	5
What are some ways I can communicate with children about coronavirus?	6
<b>Food Safety and Other Precautions During the COVID-19 Outbreak</b>	<b>7</b>
Personal Hygiene	7
Handwashing and Hand Sanitizing	8
Gloves	9
Cleaning and Sanitizing	12
Social Distancing	13
Face Masks	14
Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)	16
Caring for Your Team	16
Communication	19
Training	20
<b>Best Practices for USDA Meal Service During the COVID-19 Outbreak</b>	<b>21</b>
Outdoor Food Setup	21
Indoor Food Setup	21
Setting Up Your Point of Service	21
Best Practices for Point-of-Service Contact	22
<b>How to Stay 6 Feet (6') Apart While Serving Meals</b>	<b>22</b>
Recommendations for Drive-thru Meals	22
Recommendations for Walk-up Meals	23
Recommendations for Food Prep Areas	23
Recommendations for Meals Delivered to Outdoor Locations	24
Recommendations for Home-Delivered Meals	25
<b>Prevention &amp; Prompt Identification of Sick Employees</b>	<b>26</b>
Develop & Communicate Workplace Flexibilities	26
Best Practices for Risk Reduction	27
<b>What to do if someone on your team is positive for COVID-19?</b>	<b>29</b>
Cleaning & Disinfecting a Building If Someone is Sick	29
HIPAA & Privacy Protection	29
<b>References and More Resources</b>	<b>30</b>

## Frequently Asked Questions: Novel Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

---

### What is COVID-19?

A novel virus is a new strain of virus that has not been previously identified. Coronavirus is a broad term used to describe a family of viruses. The novel coronavirus is called SARS-CoV-2 and the illness caused by it is called Novel Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19). This new strain of coronavirus was first detected in Wuhan, China at the end of 2019. It is understood to have initially spread from animals to humans but now is spreading from person-to-person contact. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), it is unclear how easily or sustainably this virus is spreading between people.

### How does it spread?

The virus is thought to spread mainly from person-to-person between people who are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet). The main pathway of transmission are droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes. People are thought to be most contagious when they are very sick and showing symptoms. However, recent studies show that the virus can be contagious for up to 14 days, even in people who show no symptoms.

### Does it spread through food?

Science and health authorities monitoring the spread of COVID-19 have not yet reported any incidences of the virus transmitting through food. Best practices in food safety and hygiene are recommended as the virus may still spread through food contact surfaces, food packaging materials, and interaction with customers in a food service establishment.

### How long does it live on surfaces?

Recent studies suggest that the virus is detectable on hard surfaces such as steel and plastic for up to two to three days and on cardboard for up to 24 hours.

### How can we prevent the spread?

This tool outlines additional guidance that can be implemented immediately to help your staff prevent the spread of COVID-19. Some of the major interventions school nutrition professionals can do to prevent the spread of COVID-19 include:

- Good personal hygiene
- Handwashing
- Glove use
- Wearing face coverings
- Cleaning and sanitizing
- Social distancing
- Serving meals outdoors in a non-congregate setting
- Working as a team
- Communicating with others



## What are some ways I can communicate with children about coronavirus?

Most kids have probably heard of COVID-19 or 'coronavirus' by now. And chances are, they have questions. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has provided evidence-based recommendations for helping children cope with emergencies, including the COVID-19 outbreak. Some of their guidance includes:

- Remain calm
- Be honest, but age-appropriate
- Listen to them, and answer their questions
- Be developmentally appropriate in your conversations
- Avoid blaming others or using language that can lead to stigma
- Reassure them that the disease has milder symptoms in younger people than older people
- Emphasize what we can do to stay healthy, including hand washing, covering coughs and sneezes, staying home, and social distancing when in public
- Model behavior that reduces the spread of the virus

Print [This Free Kid-Friendly Infographic](#) and Fold It Into a Mini Comic Book!



### Coronavirus MythBusters

Make sure children understand that not everything posted online is accurate. The World Health Organization has created a coronavirus MythBusters page to help differentiate between fact and Fiction. <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public/myth-busters>



## Food Safety and Other Precautions During the COVID-19 Outbreak

### Personal Hygiene

- Wear clean clothing.
- Do not wear jewelry, watches, or loose clothing or accessories that might come into contact with food or your workstation (e.g. ties, sleeves, scarves, headphones, name badges).
- Use effective hair restraints such as hats, hair coverings or nets, beard restraints and clothing that fully covers body hair.
- Place mobile phones away from all workstations. **Phones can be a vehicle for many germs and viruses, including COVID-19.**
- Consume food and drink (even water) away from food preparation areas, and thoroughly wash hands before returning to work.
- Launder aprons after each meal service or utilize single-use aprons. Avoid asking staff to launder aprons at home.

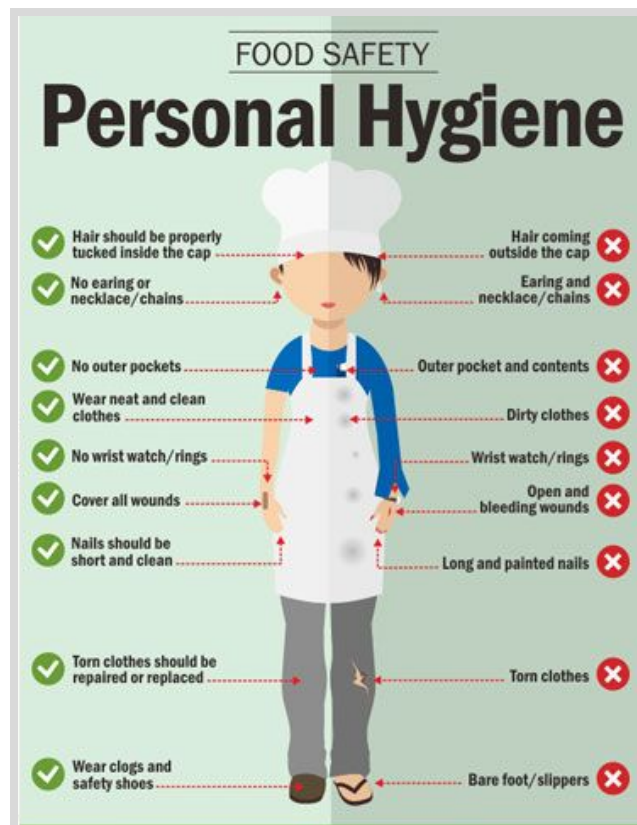


Image Source: SafetyPosterShop.com

## When to Stay Home

Team members with cough, shortness of breath, fever, or other symptoms of illness should not report to work and should seek medical advice about when to return to work.

Employees who have been in close contact with someone who is awaiting COVID-19 test results should follow the advice of medical professionals, or stay home until they have more information. If they have been in contact with someone who has tested positive, they should stay home for the period of time recommended by local regulatory authorities, and be symptom-free before returning to work. It may be necessary to avoid returning to work for 14-21 days.

## Handwashing and Hand Sanitizing

The entire handwashing process should take about 40-60 seconds. Wash hands thoroughly with soap and warm running water, scrubbing for at least 20 seconds. Dry hands completely using single-use towels, electric hand dryers, or other hand drying devices approved by your local regulatory authority.

**Tip:** When washing hands, scrub for at least 20 seconds. Need a timer? Hum the “Happy Birthday” song from beginning to end, twice.

The use of hand antiseptics or sanitizer may be an effective way to stop the spread of the coronavirus if the hand sanitizer contains at least **60% alcohol**. However, these products are not a replacement for hand washing when engaged in food preparation tasks. Hand sanitizers are most useful when used in combination with regular handwashing and the use of single-use gloves. Hand sanitizers may also be a good option for areas where hand washing is not possible or convenient, such as during drive-thru or walk-up meal services in the school parking lot.

### 7 Handwashing Steps: Prevent Infections from Spreading

Use these handwashing steps to keep germs out of your department, cut down on sick days, and even lower your facility's annual healthcare costs.

- 1 Don't rush through it.**  
According to the World Health Organization, the entire handwashing process should take about 40-60 seconds.
- 2 Wet your hands first.**  
You can use either cold or warm water. If hands are extremely greasy or dirty, use warm-to-hot water to help trap dirt and grease within the soap itself, thus enabling a better cleaning.
- 3 Use soap.**  
Don't scrimp on it; apply enough of it to cover all surfaces of your hands.
- 4 Rub hands palm-to-palm.**  
Put your right palm over your left dorsum with interlaced fingers (and vice versa). Then rub them again palm-to-palm with fingers interlaced.
- 5 Rub your hands, palm-to-palm, vigorously for at least 20 seconds.**  
Scrub all surfaces, including the backs of your hands, wrists, between your fingers, and under your fingernails.
- 6 Rinse your hands with water.**  
Dry them thoroughly with a single-use towel or air dryer.
- 7 To avoid recontamination,**  
use a single-use towel to turn off the water faucet (if necessary).

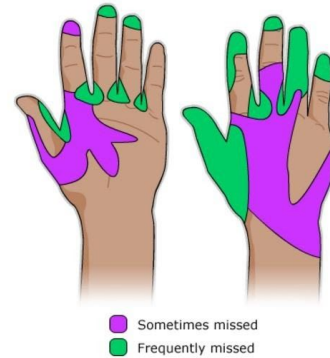
GRAINGER.COM / 1.800.GRAINGER

**GRAINGER**



## When to Wash Hands During the COVID-19 Outbreak

- ☐ Before starting work
- ☐ Before putting on gloves
- ☐ Before putting on a mask or face cover
- ☐ When changing tasks
- ☐ When re-entering the kitchen from outside
- ☐ Before and after eating food
- ☐ After drinking water
- ☐ After touching mobile phone
- ☐ After touching face, hair, eyes or mouth
- ☐ After touching a mask or face cover
- ☐ Before and after using the toilet
- ☐ After touching clothing or apron
- ☐ Upon return to the workstation
- ☐ After breaks
- ☐ After removing a mask or face cover
- ☐ After finishing work
- ☐ Arriving home from work
- ☐ As often as possible



The diagram above shows the parts of the hands that are most frequently missed during hand washing  
Source: Royal College of Nursing

## When to Use Hand Sanitizer During the COVID-19 Outbreak

- ☐ In combination with handwashing
- ☐ Between glove changes
- ☐ Any time you touch or change a mask or face cover
- ☐ Any time hand washing is not possible
- ☐ As often as possible as supplies permit

**Tip:** Place hand sanitizer at every hand sink, near all entryways to the kitchen, in meal service areas, and anywhere hand washing is not available.

## Gloves

Wear single-use gloves designed for food service establishments. Gloves must be non-latex in at least seven states including Arizona, California, Connecticut, Hawaii, Oregon, Ohio and Rhode Island. In lieu of latex, try nitrile or vinyl single-use gloves.

Even with proper handwashing, it is recommended that during the COVID-19 outbreak, food service workers use a barrier such as gloves, tongs, or other utensils to prevent bare hand contact with food. When used properly, wearing single-use gloves may also be considered a form of personal protective equipment that supports the health and safety of employees.

According to food safety authorities, there is no evidence that this virus is passed through food. Following proper cooking time and temperature guidelines is thought to kill the virus. Coronaviruses are primarily introduced into food service establishments through close contact with infected individuals. Good hand hygiene and wearing single-use gloves can be highly effective interventions to preventing the spread of this virus when working with food.

### **When to Wear Gloves**

- At all times when receiving deliveries
- At all times during food preparation
- At all times during food service
- During cleaning and sanitizing tasks

### **Recommendations from the field:**

“ We set up our work stations first, including taking items out of cardboard boxes and containers. Then we wash our hands and change our gloves before starting food preparation.

- Tracy Bratton, Director of Caruthers Unified School District

### **When to Change Gloves**

- When shifting tasks such as:
  - Unpacking boxes
  - Collecting meal preparation materials
  - Setting up food preparation stations
  - Preparing food
  - Disposing of waste
  - Wiping and sanitizing surfaces (counters, equipment, doorknobs, etc.)
  - Changing between any other task
- Upon returning to the work station after any break or absence from the workstation
- When gloves become dirty, damaged or torn
- After touching or changing a mask or face cover
- At any other time when the hands may have become contaminated in a manner that is reasonably likely to lead to the contamination of food or drink.

### The Do's and Don'ts of Glove Use

- DO** wash hands before putting on gloves
- DO** wash hands after removing gloves
- DO** remove gloves gently so that the outer surface is folded inward against itself to reduce contact with skin and other surfaces
- DO** change gloves after changing tasks

- DON'T** rely on gloves to replace hand washing
- DON'T** touch your face while wearing gloves
- DON'T** touch your phone while wearing gloves
- DON'T** touch your clothing while wearing gloves
- DON'T** wear gloves that are dirty or damaged
- DON'T** reuse or wash single-use gloves

## How to Remove Gloves

To protect yourself, use the following steps to take off gloves



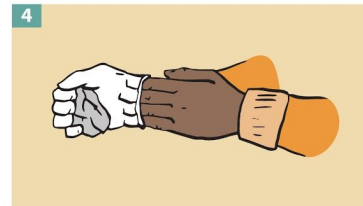
With both hands gloved, grasp the outside of one glove at the top of your wrist, being careful not to touch your bare skin.



Peel off this first glove, peeling away from your body and from wrist to fingertips, turning the glove inside out.



Hold the glove you just removed in your gloved hand.



With your ungloved hand, peel off the second glove by inserting your fingers inside the glove at the top of your wrist.

Source: Ebola Communication Network

### Recommendations from the field:



*We are serving meals via drive-thru service during the COVID-19 outbreak. The health department advised us to change our gloves frequently during service and use hand sanitizer between glove changes.*

- Leslie Pring, SNS, Director of Twin Rivers Unified School District

## Cleaning and Sanitizing

Proper cleaning and sanitizing protocols are essential to providing safe meals for children. Regular cleaning and sanitizing of objects and surfaces has been shown to be effective in preventing the spread of COVID-19 and other viruses.

**Cleaning** removes dirt and grime. Examples of surfaces to clean in a food service facility include:

### Food Contact Surfaces:

- Cooking equipment
- Tables and preparation areas
- Utensils
- Bins
- Packaging materials

### Food Service Environment:

- Floors
- Drains
- Walls
- Light fixtures
- Door knobs & handles

**Remember:** An area must be cleaned before it can be sanitized!

**Sanitizing** reduces the number of germs and microorganisms on surfaces. The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) regulations state that it is the employer's responsibility to provide adequate training and access to information to ensure that employees work in a safe environment. During the COVID-19 outbreak, sanitizing protocols are more important than ever.

The following are recommended by the Environmental Protection Agency as effective in killing this coronavirus **AND** are approved as sanitizers in the 2017 FDA Food Code:



Bleach Solution



Quaternary Ammonium ("Quat") solution

The following are **NOT recommended** for use in food service establishments during the COVID-19 Outbreak:



Iodine Solutions - **NOT** effective against COVID-19



Single-use Sanitizer Wipes - **NOT** approved by FDA for food service establishments



Any other sanitizers or disinfectants not listed above

**Remember:** Test your sanitizing solutions frequently. "Quat" solutions should have 200PPM concentration of quaternary ammonium.

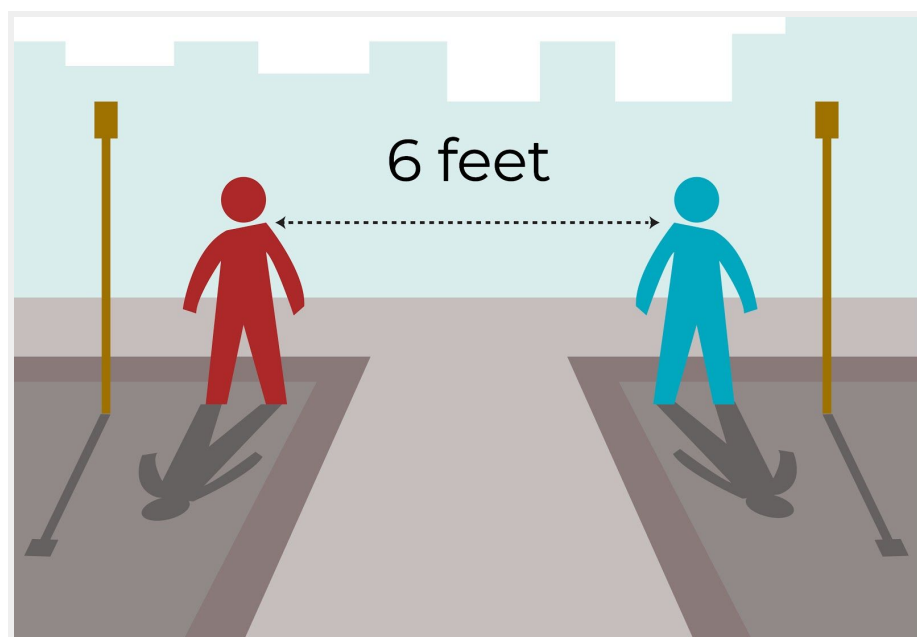
## Social Distancing

Social distancing is deliberately increasing the physical space between people to avoid spreading illness. To help prevent the spread of COVID-19, practice social distancing by staying 6 feet apart from other people. Health authorities are recommending that the public avoids crowded places and gathering in groups. Practice social distancing in all settings: during food preparation, distribution, and meal service.

Many counties in California are requiring that essential businesses, including school nutrition programs, develop and implement social distancing protocols. Implementing these precautions with staff and community members can be a challenging task to undertake. Remind your team that practicing social distancing during an outbreak is an act of altruism and good citizenship that can slow the spread of the virus.

When developing social distancing and sanitation protocols, it may be helpful to consider the following questions:

- “Do we have signage that directs families to keep six feet of physical distance?”
- “What measures are in place to minimize staff contact with the public?”
- “What measures are in place to increase sanitization?”
- “How will we communicate the Protocol with staff and the general public?”
- “What measures are in place to protect employee health?”
- “What measures are in place to keep staff at least 6 feet apart from each other during each phase of meal preparation and service?”
- “What measures are in place to keep families and students at least 6 feet away?”
- “Who will ensure the Protocol is being followed?”



## Face Masks

A person can release tiny drops into the air when talking, coughing, or sneezing. Face masks and cloth face covers can help reduce the spread of germs in the air by preventing splashes or drops of body fluid from entering or leaving the nose and mouth. When used in combination with social distancing and handwashing, face masks or cloth face covers may help reduce the transmission of COVID-19, especially from asymptomatic persons.

Face masks or cloth face covers can help prevent the spread of COVID-19 when preparing, packaging, and distributing meals. They can also provide protection against the virus entering your respiratory pathways, but are not a replacement for keeping six feet of physical distance. As of April 3, 2020, the CDC recommends that the public wear non-medical face masks or cloth face coverings when they leave their homes. This is especially important in environments where it is hard to maintain physical distance from others. Wearing a face mask or cloth face cover that you purchase or make at home will not place increased demand on medical grade respirators or surgical masks.

Cloth face masks and coverings can be made from simple household items, [click here](#) for instructions on how to make your own face covering.

### How to put on a face mask:

1. Clean hands for 20 seconds with soap and hot water or hand sanitizer.
2. Inspect the mask and check that it is clean and there are no tears or holes. Determine which side of the mask is the top, and which side of the mask is the front.
3. **Masks with ear loops:** hold by the loops and place around each ear.  
**Masks with ties:** hold by the ties and bring the mask to nose level. Secure the ties with a bow behind your head.  
**Masks with bands:** pull the top strap over your head, then pull the bottom strap over your head so it rests comfortably.



**Tip:** Do not touch the mask while wearing it, even when talking to others. If you do, wash or sanitize hands and change gloves.



**Remember:** Make sure masks are fitted over your face and nose with no gaps between our face and mask!

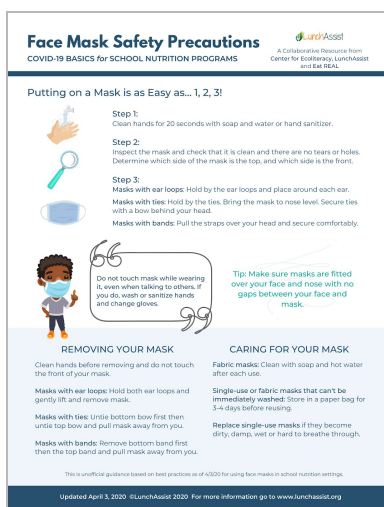
#### How to remove a face mask:

1. Clean hands for 20 seconds with soap and water or hand sanitizer before removing the mask. **Do not** touch the front of the mask.
2. **Masks with ear loops:** hold both ear loops and gently lift and remove the mask away from the face. **Masks with ties:** untie the bottom bow first, then untie the top bow and pull the mask away from the face. **Masks with bands:** remove bottom band first, then the top band and pull the mask away from the face.
3. Wash hands for 20 seconds with soap and water or hand sanitizer.

#### Caring for your mask:

- **Fabric masks:** clean with soap and hot water after each use.
- **Single-use or fabric masks** that can't be immediately washed: store in paper bag for 3-4 days before reusing.
- Replace **single-use masks** if they become dirty, damp, wet or hard to breathe through.

[Click Here to Download the Face Mask Safety Tip Sheet](#)



## Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Examples of PPE may include: gloves, goggles, face shields, face masks, and respiratory protection. PPE is intended for specific employees that are at risk for exposure to COVID-19.

- The following are recommended PPE for food service workers:
  - Face mask or cloth face cover
  - Single-use gloves
  - Clean apron
- The following are practices that support the efficacy of PPE for food service workers:
  - Social distancing
  - Hand washing
  - Hand sanitizer with 60% alcohol
  - Hair restraint

Additional forms of medical-grade PPE may not be the right choice given current shortages of PPE available for healthcare professionals who are treating infected patients. In addition, the lack of training for how to use the materials appropriately, overall costs of sustaining such an effort, and potential for a false sense of security could potentially increase risks.

- The following PPE are **NOT** currently recommended for use in food service establishments:
  - ✗ Face shields
  - ✗ N95 Particulate Respirator Face Masks
  - ✗ Medical gowns
  - ✗ Medical gloves

## OSHA Safety Requirements

OSHA requires employers to take reasonable precautions to ensure employee safety and prohibits employers from placing their employees in situations likely to cause serious physical harm or death.

Reasonable precautions are subject to change depending on the circumstances. During the COVID-19 outbreak, employers may need to allow high-risk individuals to have options for working from home. Employers are advised to follow the guidelines of their human resources department, local regulatory authorities, and refer to the [CDC](https://www.cdc.gov). Share information and updates with your team as appropriate.

## Caring for Your Team

The COVID-19 outbreak is generating stress and worry across the population. During times of crisis, it is important that we support one another's health and well-being. Try to practice compassion and

empathy for others. Ensure that teams are taking breaks, and implement flexible schedules when possible. Make time for emotional wellness check-ins that build trust and cohesiveness with your team.

### **Smart Staffing Strategies**

Consider creative ways to schedule the essential staff who are working during the COVID-19 outbreak. Dividing the workforce into smaller teams may improve your ability to continuously serve the community and reduce health risks associated with interacting with the public. When possible, employ staffing strategies that promote the safety of your employees and help to slow the spread of the virus. As staffing levels permit, here are a some examples:

#### **Alternate**

##### **Alternate work days**

Team A provides meal services during week 1  
Team B provides meal services during week 2  
(repeat)

##### **Alternate who comes into contact with the public**

Team A prepares meals during week 1  
Team B serves meals during week 1  
Team A serves meals during week 2  
Team B prepares meals during week 2  
(repeat)

#### **Isolate**

##### **Isolate from other teams**

Team A prepares and serves meals at Site A  
Team B prepares and serves meals at Site B  
If Team A needs something from Team B, a no contact hand off ensures teams do not come into contact with one another.

##### **Isolate food production staff**

Team A prepares meals for all sites (trained food handlers)  
Team B serves meals for all sites (front of house or volunteer staff)

## **Reduce**

### **Serve meals for multiple days**

Work with your state agency to gain approval for serving meals for multiple days at one time, thereby reducing the number of times that your staff are interacting with each other or the public. To maximize opportunities for families while using this model, you can offer meal service on two different days, or offer meals at two different times during a given day. Refer to the [COVID-19 Emergency Meal Service Toolkit](#) for more ideas.

### **Work from home**

Complete as much work from home as possible. Tasks that may be completed at home might include food orders, menu planning, end of day paperwork, scheduling, budgeting, and more.

Allow high risk individuals to support the team from home by helping with tasks that can be completed remotely.

### **Assign Team Member Roles**

Assigning specific roles for each shift can be an effective way to provide structure, as well as keep teams safe, supported, and accountable. Rotate individual roles within the team to lessen the stress placed on any one individual. Consider assigning individuals with high-risk of illness to roles that limit their exposure to the public.

### **Emotional Support Buddy**

Assign one person to do a daily emotional wellness check with each person on the team. This person can provide support, monitor stress and inform team leaders when someone might need a break or additional help.

### **Health & Hygiene Captain**

Before teams start work, survey team members about whether they have had any signs or symptoms, or close contact with infected individuals that may require further attention by a team leader. Alerts and reminds team members about hand hygiene and glove-use throughout the day.

### **Commander of Cleaning and Sanitizing**

Supports the team in ensuring high-touch surfaces are cleaned and sanitized at regular intervals, based on time or exposure (i.e. sanitizing a table after a family picks up their food, sanitizing a workstation at the end of service, etc.). Ensure hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol is available for people to use in public areas. This role can be assigned to several people, with each one focusing on a different surface area.

### **Social Distancing Manager**

Helps team members, families being served, and others practice social distancing. Provides reminders to families arriving to pick-up meals by communicating specific guidelines being followed at the site.

Checks that signage is posted and communicates with team leaders for additional support that may be needed to practice social distancing.

### Recommendations from the field:



*This week our days have started with a team meeting that is a 5-minute update. We always begin with: 'Thank you for showing up to feed the kids. I am grateful you are here. Your work matters.' Which is then followed by food safety reminders, today's plan of action, and critical updates.*

- Chef Kelsey Perusse, MS, RDN, Nutrition Coordinator, Pleasanton Unified School District

### Communication

Effective communication provides clarity, builds trust, and prevents the spread of misinformation. Consider the following when determining how best to communicate with your team and the families that you serve:

- ☐ Disseminate regular information about meal services offered during the COVID-19 outbreak.
- ☐ Provide information about the importance of social distancing and how to practice this in the school nutrition setting.
- ☐ Promote good food safety for families as they take meals off-site. Printable [Food Safety Cards](#) are available in English and Spanish.
- ☐ Listen to concerns, answer questions, and model good behavior.
- ☐ Provide updates to your team and the families you serve throughout the duration of the outbreak through emails, team meetings, and social media.
- ☐ Update relevant policies and procedures that are tailored to the COVID-19 outbreak and share them with your team.
- ☐ Communicate any other information you feel is critical to ensuring school food safety precautions are understood and followed during the COVID-19 outbreak.



## Training

A well-informed staff provides the foundation for safe food service, so it is critical that all team members receive adequate training for their job duties. The USDA has established Professional Standards requirements for school nutrition directors, managers, and staff. During the COVID-19 outbreak, it is especially important that school nutrition professionals participate in regular training and development.

Due to staffing shortages and changes to the operation model during school closures, some nutrition departments may rely on volunteers or non-program staff, such as bus drivers, to help serve and distribute meals. Introducing individuals who are not trained on food safety and USDA program guidelines may present increased risk for health and safety as well as compliance issues.

We recommend that all persons helping with emergency feeding operations receive adequate training on the following topics, including volunteers and non-program staff:

- ☐ Handwashing
- ☐ Personal hygiene
- ☐ When to stay home
- ☐ Wearing single-use gloves
- ☐ Wearing a face mask or face cover
- ☐ Cleaning and sanitizing
- ☐ Social distancing

The Institute for Child Nutrition provides materials for some of the training topics listed above. Go to the <https://theicn.org/prevent> for training videos, posters, standardized operating procedure templates, and more.



**COMING SOON:** E-learning for child nutrition professionals on additional topics will be available through LunchAssist. [SUBSCRIBE TO THE LUNCHASSIST LISTSERV](#) for Child Nutrition News & Resources.



## Best Practices for USDA Meal Service During the COVID-19 Outbreak

### Outdoor Food Setup

(recommended)

- Use tents to protect from rain & sun.
- Encourage the use of hats and sunscreen (wash hands before and after application!).
- Avoid handing meals directly to people, as this does not support social distancing.

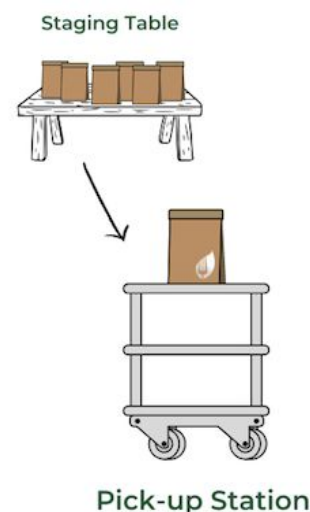
### Indoor Food Setup

(for snow or inclement weather only)

- Position 'Point of Service' just at the building entrance to reduce or avoid time spent in building.
- Avoid handing meals directly to people, as this does not support social distancing.
- Set up tables indoors, as you would outdoors (see below).
- Choose spaces that maximize ventilation and minimize surface areas that need to be disinfected.

### Setting Up Your Point of Service

1. Ensure all meals are properly unitized and covered to limit the exposure to human-touch.
2. Place signage throughout the service area in **highly visible places**. Avoid placing signage in high-touch areas such as on serving tables. Yard and lawn signs work well for directing traffic. Remove unnecessary signs to help people read the most important information.
3. Arrange **separate tables** for food staging and food pickup. Tables should be **8 feet** apart from each other. Place food staging tables approximately 8 ft **behind** the food pick-up table(s).
4. Place the bulk of the prepared meals on the **staging** tables. When families arrive, direct one food service worker to transfer a set amount of meals to the food pick-up table. For **drive-thru** meal service, use carts in lieu of the pick up table and a large tray to pass meals to families. Whenever possible, place the food for only **one family** on the pick up table, cart, or tray. Sanitize high-touch surfaces before restocking.
5. Consider setting up multiple points of service for highly trafficked sites to reduce lines and crowds.
6. Tables, trays and carts should be made of hard plastic, metal (such as stainless steel) or laminate. Avoid placing **decorations or signage** to minimize surface areas that need to be disinfected.
7. Wipe down food pick-up tables, trays, or carts with **sanitizer** in between **each** family interaction.



## Best Practices for Point-of-Service Contact

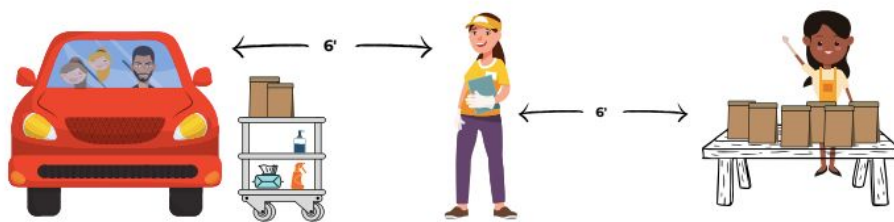
- ❑ Direct car or foot traffic to enter parking lots from a specified driveway and to exit out of another to increase efficiency and promote social distancing.
- ❑ Post signage at the entrance and behind each food pick-up table, thanking families for practicing 6 feet of social distancing from workers and other families.
- ❑ Encourage employees to role model social distancing between families and staff and students.

## How to Stay 6 Feet (6') Apart While Serving Meals

---

### Recommendations for Drive-thru Meals

- Avoid handing meals directly to individuals.
- Place meals on tray(s) or cart(s) so that families can pick up unitized meals.
- **Do not reach into vehicles**, to promote social distancing.
- For meals placed in the trunk, avoid touching unnecessary items and sanitize hands immediately after closing the trunk door.
- Whenever possible, place the food for only **one family** on the pick up table, cart, or tray.
- Sanitize high-touch surfaces before restocking.
- If you touch parts of a vehicle or someone's hands, change your gloves and wash and sanitize your hands.
- Change gloves and wash or sanitize hands frequently. Practice no contact hand-offs.
- When transferring food to families, don't touch or reach into vehicles, or make physical contact with others.
- Sanitize hands and on surfaces regularly.



## Recommendations for Walk-up Meals

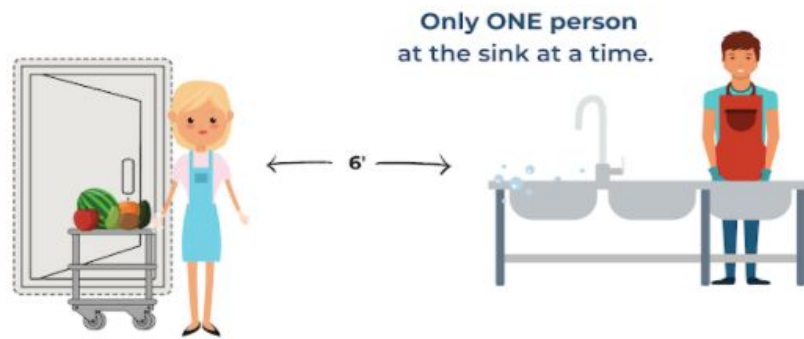
- Avoid handing meals directly to individuals.
- Place meals on table(s) so that families can pick up unitized meals.
- Use multiple tables, placed 8-feet apart, as needed to promote social distancing.
- Whenever possible, place the food for only **one family** on the pick up table.
- Sanitize high-touch surfaces before restocking.
- Sanitize frequently.
- Practice no contact hand-offs.
- When transferring food to families, don't touch or make physical contact with others.
- Sanitize hands and surfaces regularly.



## Recommendations for Food Prep Areas

- Space workstations 6 feet apart to avoid making physical contact with others.
- Sanitize hands and surfaces regularly.



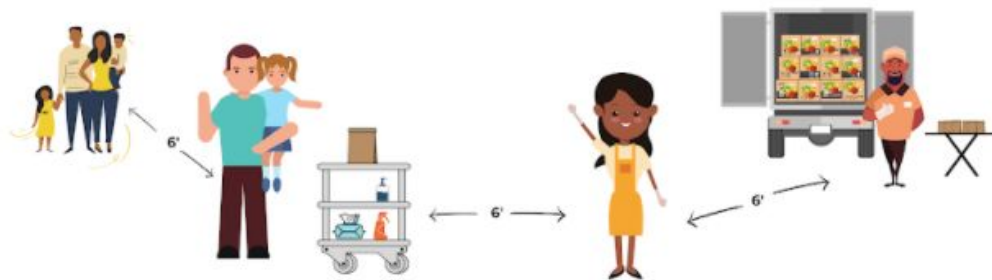


- When kitchen space is limited, consider moving operations to another location, such as an empty Multi-Purpose Room where teams can be 6 feet apart.
- In lieu of creating an assembly line for meal production, assign each person to a station where they can build unitized meals 6 feet apart from coworkers.



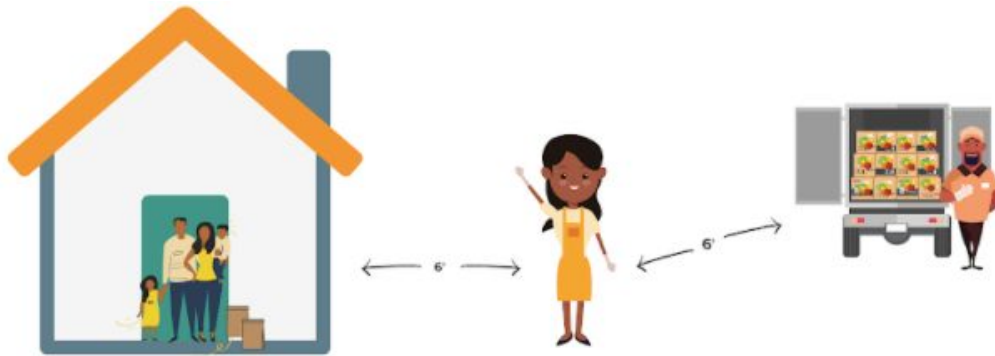
### Recommendations for Meals Delivered to Outdoor Locations

- Practice no contact hands-off.
- When giving food to families, avoid making physical contact with others.
- Sanitize hands and surfaces frequently.



## Recommendations for Home-Delivered Meals

- Practice no contact hand-offs when delivering food to homes.
- Do not enter the home or make physical contact with others.
- Notify families when meals have been delivered. Wash hands and change gloves after knocking or ringing doorbells.



**Click Below to Download Full Set of Social Distancing Cards**

[Download in English](#)

[Download in Spanish](#)

## Prevention & Prompt Identification of Sick Employees

*This section adapted from [OSHA's Guidance on Preparing Workplaces for COVID-19](#) and the [Los Angeles County Department of Public Health's Guidance for Food Facilities](#).*

Prompt identification of potentially infectious individuals is a critical step in protecting employees, families, students, and the community. Directors may inform and encourage employees to self-monitor for signs and symptoms of COVID-19. Self-monitoring may include employees asking themselves a series of questions each morning before coming in to work.

### Sample Self-Assessment Questions:

- “Am I feeling more fatigued/exhausted than usual today?”
- “Does anyone in my household have new symptoms?”
- “Do I have a fever (104°F)?”
- “Do I have a cough?”

Instruct team members to contact a supervisor before leaving the house if they answer “yes” to any of the self-assessment questions.

In addition to encouraging employees to conduct self-assessments, instruct site leaders to check-in with their teams at the beginning of each shift. Employees who appear to be ill upon arrival to work or become sick during the day are advised to be sent home immediately.

[Download the “Taking Care of Your Team Daily Check-in”](#)

As best practice, School Nutrition Programs may develop policies and procedures for employees to report when they are sick or experiencing symptoms of COVID-19. Employees with fever or respiratory illness are advised to stay home and not return to work until at least 3 days (72 hours) after recovery, which means fever has resolved without the use of fever-reducing medications, there is improvement in respiratory symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath), **AND** at least 7 days have passed since symptoms first appeared.

## Develop & Communicate Workplace Flexibilities

- Actively encourage sick employees to stay home.
- Allow employees who are sick with acute respiratory illness to stay home, even if they have not obtained a healthcare provider's note. Healthcare provider offices and medical facilities may be extremely busy and not able to provide such documentation in a timely way.
- Maintain flexible policies that permit employees to stay home to care for a sick family member. Employers should be aware that more employees may need to stay at home to care for sick children or other sick family members than is usual.



- Be aware of employees' concerns about pay, leave, safety, health, and other issues that may arise during the COVID-19 outbreak. Address these concerns in advance to promote a sense of safety and compassion within the department.
- Provide training, education, and informational material about health and safety, including proper hygiene practices, social distancing and the use of gloves, face covers, and disposable aprons. Training material should be easy to understand and available in the appropriate language and literacy level for all workers.

“Informed workers who feel safe at work are less likely  
to be unnecessarily absent.” - OSHA

### Best Practices for Risk Reduction

Reduce or minimize exposure to COVID-19 by implementing the following policies and procedures:

- Post a sign in a visible place at all building entries that instructs members of the community and employees to not enter if they have symptoms of respiratory illness, including fever or cough.  
[Download Sample Sign](#)
- Provide access to handwashing facilities with soap and water or to hand sanitizer that contains at least 60 percent alcohol. Consider mobile hand washing stations for outdoor meal service.
- Divide staff into alternating shifts to reduce the total number of employees in a facility at a given time. Schedule employees to the same shift and avoid moving employees between shifts to minimize spread in the event that an employee is diagnosed with COVID-19.
- Consider temporarily assigning employees at high risk for serious illness due to COVID-19 to duties that limit their exposure to the public. High risk refers to older adults, pregnant women, and those with compromised immune systems or underlying medical problems.
- Work with your teams to strategize solutions to implement social distancing in all areas of meal preparation and service. This may require some creativity in small kitchens and work spaces. Seek out alternative areas that may be utilized, such as Multi-Purpose Rooms.
- Monitor meal services to ensure the community is practicing social distancing. This is especially important for wait lines at walk-up points of service. Put tape on the ground or cones to keep families adequately spaced. Recommend designating an employee that will ensure the social distancing requirements to any lines that form are met.
- Develop emergency communication plans, including a forum for answering employees' concerns via phone or internet, if feasible.

- Provide employees with up-to-date education and training on COVID-19 risk factors and protective behaviors (i.e. cough etiquette and care of PPE). Update education and training materials daily, if needed.

[Download Safety Precautions Tip Sheet \(English & Spanish\)](#)

- Train employees how to put on, use/wear, and remove face covers and gloves, including in the context of their current and potential duties. Training material should be easy to understand and available in the appropriate language and literacy level for all workers.

[Download Face Mask Safety Tip Sheet \(English & Spanish\)](#)

- Provide resources and a work environment that promotes personal hygiene. Provide tissues, no-touch trash cans, hand soap, and alcohol-based hand sanitizers containing at least 60% alcohol.
- Post handwashing signs in all restrooms.

#### Recommendations from the field:



*Each morning, a school nurse visits our sites to screen our employees and take their temperatures. They ask each employee if they have had any respiratory symptoms or changes in their health. This helps our staff feel more protected and cared for.*

- Chef Michael Jochner, Morgan Hill Unified School District

[Download Sample Health Check Form](#)

## What to do if someone on your team is positive for COVID-19?

---

This section adapted from the [Los Angeles County Department of Public Health's Guidance for Food Facilities](#).

Upon notification that an employee has tested positive for COVID-19 or is presumed positive based on symptoms associated with COVID-19, public health departments recommend taking the following actions:

1. Immediately inform the local regulatory authority and ask for guidance. Follow the guidance of your regulatory authority and human resources department to determine a course of action for your school.
2. Ensure the affected employee is excluded from the food facility and adheres to the local regulatory authority's guidance.
3. Identify all potential "close contacts" and require they adhere to appropriate quarantine orders. "Close contacts" include all household members and individuals who were within 6 feet of the ill employee for more than 10 minutes, starting 48 hours before the employee's symptoms began, until their isolation period ends.
4. Close the area. Clean and sanitize the facility according to CDC guidance outlined below.

### Cleaning & Disinfecting a Building If Someone is Sick

1. Close off all areas previously used by the person who is sick.
2. Open doors and windows to increase air circulation in the area, if possible.
3. Wait 24 hours before cleaning or disinfecting the infected area.
4. Clean and disinfect all areas used by the person who is sick, such as food prep areas, offices, bathrooms, common areas, shared electronic equipment, touch screens, keyboards, and light switches.

If more than 7 days have passed since the person who is sick visited or used the facility, additional cleaning and disinfection is not necessary.

### HIPAA & Privacy Protection

Employers need to take steps to keep employees' health information confidential at all times. Managers do not need to know an employees' specific diagnosis. Instead, the manager only needs to know that the employee will be on leave and unable to work.

## References and More Resources

Please visit the LunchAssist website for a list of policy references and memos, which are being updated regularly during this time. New resources are being added daily.

### **LunchAssist**

Resources for School Nutrition Programs during the COVID-19 Outbreak

<http://www.lunchassist.org/covid-19.html>

### **Center for Ecoliteracy**

California Food For California Kids

<https://www.californiafoodforcaliforniakids.org/>

### **Chef Ann Foundation**

COVID-19 & School Food: Resources & Support

<https://www.chefannfoundation.org/covid-19/>

### **California Department of Public Health**

Guidance to Prevent the Transmission of COVID-19 in Food and Beverage Venues

<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/OPA/Pages/NR20-024.aspx>

### **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention**

Handwashing: Clean Hands Save Lives

<https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/index.html>

Guidance for School and Childcare Programs

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/index.html>

Plan, Prepare, and Respond to Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/guidance-for-schools.html>

Social Distancing, Quarantine, and Isolation

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/social-distancing.html>

Strategy for Optimizing the Supply of Facemasks

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/ppe-strategy/face-masks.html>

Recommended Guidance for Extended Use and Limited Reuse of N95 Filtering Facepiece Respirators in Healthcare Settings

<https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/hcwcontrols/recommendedguidanceextuse.html#ref5>

Use of Cloth Face Coverings to Help Slow the Spread of COVID-19

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/diy-cloth-face-coverings.html>

### **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention**

Ready Wrigley Prepares for Flu Season, Coloring Book

[https://www.cdc.gov/cpr/readywrigley/documents/16\\_270945\\_Ready\\_Wrigley\\_flu\\_1.pdf](https://www.cdc.gov/cpr/readywrigley/documents/16_270945_Ready_Wrigley_flu_1.pdf)

### **Child Mind Institute**

Resources for Parents coping During COVID-19

<https://childmind.org/coping-during-covid-19-resources-for-parents/>

**Children's Hospital Colorado**

Answering Kids Questions about Coronavirus

[https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL6PavRVKmzUPom2ojMmVPOAp1Cj3\\_QdY](https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL6PavRVKmzUPom2ojMmVPOAp1Cj3_QdY)

**European Food Safety Association**

<https://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/news/coronavirus-no-evidence-food-source-or-transmission-route>

**Institute for Child Nutrition**

Resources for Safe Hygiene & Cleaning

<https://theicn.org/prevent>

**Johns Hopkins Medicine**

Coronavirus, Social Distancing, and Self Quarantine

<https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/health/conditions-and-diseases/coronavirus/coronavirus-social-distancing-and-self-quarantine>

**Los Angeles County Department of Public Health**

Guidance for Food Facilities

<https://mail.google.com/mail/u/4/?tab=km1&zx=pjii6yfep9nv#inbox?projector=1&messagePartId=0.1>

**Multnomah County Health Department**

Coronavirus Cleaning & Sanitizing Guidelines for Restaurants & Food Service

<https://multco.us/covid-19-cleaning-and-sanitizing-guidelines-restaurants-food-service>

**National Association of School Psychologists**

Talking to Children About COVID-19 (Coronavirus), *A Parent Resource*

[https://higherlogicdownload.s3.amazonaws.com/NASN/3870c72d-fff9-4ed7-833f-215de278d256/UploadedImages/PDFs/02292020\\_NASP\\_NASN\\_COVID-19\\_parent\\_handout.pdf](https://higherlogicdownload.s3.amazonaws.com/NASN/3870c72d-fff9-4ed7-833f-215de278d256/UploadedImages/PDFs/02292020_NASP_NASN_COVID-19_parent_handout.pdf)

**National Institutes of Health**

Duration of COVID-19 contamination on different surfaces

<https://www.nih.gov/news-events/news-releases/new-coronavirus-stable-hours-surfaces>

**National Restaurant Association**

Coronavirus Information and Resources

<https://restaurant.org/Covid19>

**Nation's Restaurant News**

Non-latex Gloves

<https://www.nrn.com/news/california-will-ban-latex-gloves-restaurants-starting-jan-1>

**OSHA**

Guidance on Preparing Workplaces for COVID-19

<https://www.osha.gov/Publications/OSHA3990.pdf>

**Santa Clara County Office of Education**

Health Check Form

[https://drive.google.com/open?id=1VSeFq6H8EjSED8lscBY\\_AP0ri2-l1rZy](https://drive.google.com/open?id=1VSeFq6H8EjSED8lscBY_AP0ri2-l1rZy)

**ServSafe**

CORONAVIRUS: What Can You Do?

[https://foodsafetyfocus.com/FoodSafetyFocus/media/Library/pdfs/Coronavirus\\_2019-nCoV\\_Info\\_TipsforRestaurants.pdf](https://foodsafetyfocus.com/FoodSafetyFocus/media/Library/pdfs/Coronavirus_2019-nCoV_Info_TipsforRestaurants.pdf)

**San Francisco Department of Public Health**

How to Put on and Remove a Face Mask

<https://www.sfdcdp.org/communicable-disease/healthy-habits/how-to-put-on-and-remove-a-face-mask/>

**TIME Magazine**

How to Take Care of Your Hands When You're Washing Them So Much to Prevent Coronavirus

<https://time.com/5800275/covid-19-wash-hands-dry-skin-tips/>

**U.S. Environmental Protection Agency**

List N: Disinfectants for Use Against SARS-CoV-2

<https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2>

**World Health Organization**

Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) advice for the public

<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public>

Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) advice for the public: When and how to use masks

<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public/when-and-how-to-use-masks>

Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) outbreak

<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019>

Mental Health Considerations during COVID-19 Outbreak

[https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/coronaviruse/mental-health-considerations.pdf?sfvrsn=6d3578af\\_2](https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/coronaviruse/mental-health-considerations.pdf?sfvrsn=6d3578af_2)