

COVID-19 Public Health Recommendations for Food Establishments

This document is to support owners and operators of food establishments with general recommendations on safe food handling, cleaning and disinfection considerations as it relates to COVID-19. For general information on COVID-19 or to find site-specific resources such as signage, please visit: ahs.ca/covid.

COVID-19 Background Information

- COVID-19 is believed to be spread mainly by coughing, sneezing or direct contact with someone who is sick with COVID-19 or with surfaces they have recently touched.
- Common symptoms include cough, fever, fatigue, sore throat, runny nose, difficulty breathing and/or shortness of breath.
- Although food has not been identified as a likely source of COVID-19 transmission, it is possible that an infected food handler could introduce the virus onto food by coughing, sneezing, or through direct hand contact.
- It is also possible that a client can introduce the virus into the food establishment by coughing or sneezing on surfaces, or onto their hands and then touching surfaces.

Food Handlers and Servers

- Food handlers must wash hands even if they have no symptoms of illness.
- Wash hands:
 - Before starting work
 - 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 blowing their nose, sneezing or coughing
 - After eating, drinking, or smoking
 - After handling money
- Food handlers should follow safe food practices such as protecting foods from contamination, minimizing direct handling of food and preventing cross contamination of foods.
- Discard any foods that may have been contaminated.
- Clean and sanitize utensils and surfaces in the kitchen regularly.
- Follow respiratory hygiene by covering your mouth when you cough or sneeze and washing your hands afterwards.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.
- It is important that food handlers inform their employer, stay at home, and seek medical advice if they think they have symptoms of respiratory illness or any illness.
- Avoid close contact (within 2 meters), when possible, with anyone showing symptoms of respiratory illness such as coughing and sneezing.

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- Staff who have recently travelled to affected regions should inform their employer and seek medical advice.

Food Facility Owners and Managers

- Ensure staff are aware of the COVID-19 outbreak and the preventative measures noted above.
- Post signs that encourage:
 - Staying home when sick
 - Covering coughs and sneezes
 - Washing hands at workplace entrances, restrooms, employee break rooms and in other visible areas
- Supervise food handlers to confirm hygienic practices are being followed.
- Ensure that appropriate facilities and supplies are provided for hand washing to enable food handlers to practice good hygiene.
- Send any ill food handlers' home until they have obtained medical advice. And support employees staying home when sick.

Additional Measures to Protect Your Staff and Customers

- Increase cleaning and disinfecting of high touch surfaces in public areas such as door handles, railings, restroom surfaces, tables, cash machines, menus, condiments, etc.
- Follow AHS [environmental cleaning recommendations](#).
- Keep restrooms stocked with soap and towels or hand dryers.
- Provide at a minimum, 60% alcohol-based hand sanitizer for customers to use.
- **Suspend higher risk food service methods like buffets.**
- If you are advised of a person in your facility (staff or customer) who has tested positive for COVID-19, follow the advice provided by Public Health.

For more information, please contact your nearest Environmental Public Health office.

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403-388-6689

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