



THE OHIO STATE
UNIVERSITY

COVID-19 AND FOOD SAFETY FAQ

IS CORONAVIRUS A CONCERN WITH TAKEOUT?

CDC, FDA and USDA are not aware of any reports at this time that suggest COVID-19 can be transmitted by food or food packaging. Current evidence shows the biggest risk of transmission of COVID-19 is being around individuals who are symptomatic. Food businesses should be following employee health policies and local health department recommendations to keep these individuals home.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS OF FOOD FROM TAKEOUT OR DRIVE-THRU FOOD?

- There is no current indication that takeout or drive-thru meals will increase illness.
- This option is a good risk management choice, especially for high risk and elderly groups because it reduces the number of touch points.

CAN I GET COVID-19 FROM TOUCHING FOOD OR PACKAGING EXPOSED TO CORONAVIRUS?

- The risk of transfer of viruses is very low, based on current research.
- To further minimize risk, handling food packaging should be followed by handwashing and/or using hand sanitizer.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS OF FOOD DELIVERED TO HOME?

- Similar to takeout, food delivery reduces the amount of touch points associated with dining in a restaurant.
- Many delivery programs have instituted no touch/no interaction options, which greatly minimize risk.

WHAT HAPPENS IN YOUR BODY IF YOU DO INGEST CORONAVIRUS THROUGH FOOD?

- If you consume food that is contaminated with coronavirus, your stomach acid will inactivate the virus since it is very acidic (pH 2.0).
 - Even if your stomach acid did not inactivate the virus, COVID-19 is not well-suited to infect the body via the intestines.
- The only possible way to get sick is if, during eating, the virus comes in contact with a specific type respiratory cells.
 - This scenario is way more unlikely than the modes of transmission that are typically being discussed regarding COVID-19.

For more info, visit: www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov

Updated March 20, 2020



NC STATE
EXTENSION