

HSEO Feature, April 6, 2020

## ***Food Safety and COVID-19***

As we learn more about this deadly virus, we question the impact it may have on our food supply. I've listed just a few of the questions people may have and answers from the FDA:

(<https://www.fda.gov/emergency-preparedness-and-response/coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19/coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19-frequently-asked-questions#food> ).

**Question:** Is the meat I purchase from the grocery store safe to eat?

**Answer:** The meat purchased at the grocery store is safe and consumers should feel confident it has passed all the local, state and federal regulations. According to the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), there has been no data indicating that the current COVID-19 pandemic can be transferred from food or packaging. However, one must continue to properly wash hands, food-contact surfaces and utensils used for preparing food to prevent any cross-contamination.

**Question:** Are food products a risk for COVID-19?

**Answer:** Unlike foodborne gastrointestinal (GI) viruses like norovirus and hepatitis A that often make people ill through contaminated food, COVID-19 is a virus that causes respiratory illness and not gastrointestinal illness, and foodborne exposure to this virus is not known to be a route of transmission. It may be possible that a person can get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose, or possibly their eyes, but this is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads.

**Question:** Can I get the coronavirus from delivered food, food packaging, food containers and preparation areas?

**Answer:** Currently there is no evidence of food, food containers, or food packaging being associated with transmission of COVID-19. If you are concerned about contamination of food or food packaging, wash your hands, scrubbing for at least 20 seconds after handling food packaging, after removing food from the packaging, before you prepare food for eating and before you eat.

**Question:** Can I get COVID-19 from a food worker handling my food?

**Answer:** The virus that causes COVID-19 is spreading from person-to-person in some communities in the U.S. The CDC recommends that if you are sick, stay home until you are better and no longer pose a risk of infecting others. Anyone handling, preparing and serving food should always follow safe food handling procedures, such as washing hands and surfaces often.

**Question:** Should I wash my produce with soap and water?

**Answer:** Consumers should not wash fruits and vegetables with detergent or soap according to the USDA. These cleaning products are not approved or labeled by the FDA for use on foods. One could ingest residues from soap or detergent absorbed on the produce. Wash fresh produce under cool, running water and use a vegetable brush for the less delicate produce (potatoes, carrots, etc.).

For more answers to questions, call ISU AnswerLine at 800-262-3804, Monday – Friday, 9-12n;1-4pm