COVID-19 Checklist for Safe Food Handling

Protecting Against COVID-19

Ohio Department of Health Director Amy Acton, M.D., MPH, strongly recommends that Ohioans are aware of the following safe food practices for retail food stores, restaurants, and pick-up and delivery services to protect workers and customers.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) issued information and best practices on April 9.


Employees and employers in food establishments should be healthy and be clean.

a. In addition to handwashing for at least 20 seconds or using 60% alcohol-based hand sanitizer and avoiding touching eyes, nose and mouth, employees should wear a mask or cloth face covering per the FDA and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

b. Follow the FDA’s four steps to food safety – Clean, Separate, Cook, and Chill. Never touch ready-to-eat foods with bare hand. Use single service gloves, deli tissue, or suitable utensils. Wrap food containers to prevent cross contamination.

c. Employers should pre-screen employees exposed to COVID-19 for temperature and other symptoms. Instruct sick employees to stay home and send immediately if sick.

Food establishments should always clean and disinfect and follow protective measures.

a. Employees should be trained on cleaning and disinfecting procedures, and protective measures, per the FDA and CDC.

b. High-touch surfaces should be disinfected frequently using EPA-registered disinfectants.

c. Food containers and utensils should always be cleaned and sanitized.

d. Offer sanitizers and wipes to customers to clean grocery cart/basket handles, or utilize store personnel to conduct cleaning/sanitizing.

For more information, visit: coronavirus.ohio.gov
Educate customers and employees on the importance of distancing.

a. Avoid displays that may result in customer gathering; discontinue self-serve buffets and salad bars; and discourage employee gatherings.

b. Place floor markings and signs to encourage social distancing.

c. Shorten customer time in the store by encouraging customers to use shopping lists and order ahead of time, if offered.

d. Set up designated pick-up areas inside or outside retail establishments.

Take safety precautions if offering delivery and pick-up.

a. If offering delivery, ensure coolers and transport containers are cleaned and sanitized; maintain time and temperature controls; and avoid cross contamination.

b. Encourage customers to use “no touch” deliveries and notify customers as the delivery is arriving.

c. If offering pick-up, establish designated zones, offer curb-side pick-up, and practice social distancing.

For additional information, visit coronavirus.ohio.gov.

For answers to your COVID-19 questions, call 1-833-4-ASK-ODH (1-833-427-5634).

If you or a loved one are experiencing anxiety related to the coronavirus pandemic, help is available. Call the Disaster Distress Helpline at 1-800-985-5990 (1-800-846-8517 TTY); connect with a trained counselor through the Ohio Crisis Text Line by texting the keyword “4HOPE” to 741 741; or call the Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services help line at 1-877-275-6364 to find resources in your community.

Additional resources:

For more information, visit: coronavirus.ohio.gov