

Guidelines for preparing, packing and receiving food items during COVID-19

Introduction

There is no evidence that the SARS-CoV-2 virus which causes COVID-19 is spread via food. *

The virus has been shown to stay on surfaces for up to 72 hours after contamination. However, the virus starts to break down once it leaves a human host so the chance of infection reduces over time.

**** DO NOT** prepare food or pack boxes for others if you:

- ✘ have the following symptoms ...
 - fever
 - breathing difficulties, breathlessness
 - cough
 - sore throat
 - fatigue or tiredness
- ✘ have a close contact with COVID-19 and are required to self-isolate.
- ✘ have been overseas in the past 14 days and are required to self-isolate.

For those packing/preparing food items

- Practice **good hand hygiene** – wash hands with soap and water for 20 seconds before and after preparing food or handling groceries.
- Arrange to **drop off** groceries or meals at your recipients' doorstep rather than face-to-face.
- On arrival, **sanitise your hands** between leaving your car and knocking on door, pressing doorbell or entering the premises.
- If dropping off frozen meals, make sure that someone is there to put the food directly into the freezer to prevent thawing and re-freezing, or else pack the food in an esky/cooler bag with an ice-block.

For those receiving food/groceries

- Treat groceries as you would if you had bought them yourself from the supermarket – wash your hands after putting the groceries away and especially before touching your face.
- Place frozen meals in the freezer if not using straightaway.
- Ensure that any frozen food is reheated thoroughly before consumption.

These are just general guidelines, not specific medical advice – please keep up to date with the latest health advice from www.health.vic.gov.au as recommendations may change. You can also ring the National Coronavirus Helpline on 1800 020 080 for any specific enquiries.