



## COVID-19 and Food Safety FAQ

### **Is food safe to eat right now?**

“Currently there is no evidence of food or food packaging being associated with transmission of COVID-19. The virus is thought to spread mainly from person-to-person. This includes between people who are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet), and through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes. 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 mouth, nose, or possibly their eyes, but this is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads. However, it’s always critical to follow the 4 key steps of food safety—clean, separate, cook, and chill.”

<https://www.fda.gov/food/food-safety-during-emergencies/food-safety-and-coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19>

### **What about prepared food? Like from a restaurant?**

Again, there is no evidence of food or food packaging being associated with transmission of COVID-19. Generally, it is possible for viruses to be transmitted through objects and products that are not properly handled, temperature-controlled, or cleaned. All food donors to BFR are businesses whose employees are trained in food safety and all prepared food deliveries are scheduled to spend less than an hour without temperature control.

### **Are there food shortages?**

“There are no nationwide food shortages, although inventories at grocery stores might be low.”

<https://www.fda.gov/food/food-safety-during-emergencies/food-safety-and-coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19>

This also can impact BFR deliveries, which may also be reduced. Pandemics, though they impact everyone, do not impact everyone equally. Many people will experience food shortages because they typically have low incomes or lose income because of COVID-19. Many people will have additional trouble accessing food because of reduction in services if they want to avoid going into public because they are vulnerable to the virus. People who have a hard time accessing food on a day-to-day basis outside of a pandemic will likely find it incredibly difficult to stock up on food in order to quarantine or isolate.

### **I use a grocery program in my community. What should we do at grocery programs to support our health and safety?**

1. Wash your hands frequently and for 20 seconds before using the program. Practice other personal hygiene and health recommendations like staying home generally and

especially if you're sick (find a neighbor to leave food at your door instead), sneeze or cough into your elbow, and avoid touching your face.

2. Maintain 6 feet distance from other people using the program. Do not wait for or gather around the food in a group. Take food and go back home.
3. Inform people about and encourage social distancing (staying at home and 6 feet away from other people) and other personal health practices that keep the community safer.
4. Limit the number of people touching the food. One volunteer touching the food and making grab-and-go bags for people using the program is best. It is both difficult and disappointing that people can't choose what they want as they normally can, but this is the safest thing for everyone during this critical time to limit the spread of the virus and protect public health.
5. Let BFR know if you want to pause deliveries for any reason. Give as much notice as possible for any changes and at least 3 days' notice to resume a delivery. Your normally scheduled delivery will be available to you as much as possible during and after COVID-19 and will not be affected by the community wanting to pause the delivery.
6. Sanitize surfaces before and after the program happens.
7. Clean food, including food packaging, after you receive it and bring it home.
8. Use credible information to assess your own risk and the risk to your community. If something doesn't feel safe to you, avoid that thing and talk to your Grocery Program Coordinator or reach out to Boulder Food Rescue.

#### **What is BFR doing to support the health and safety grocery programs right now?**

1. Providing programs with guidelines, information, and supplies like plastic gloves, plastic bags, sanitizing spray, paper towels to clean the space
2. Working with GPCs to coordinate systems that are as safe as possible and can work in their communities.
3. Coordinating extra volunteers to help make grab-and-go bags to limit congregating and social contact.
4. Providing courier volunteers with safety information and logistics to make deliveries as safe as possible.

#### **What are some credible resources for me to reference about COVID-19?**

1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>
2. Boulder County Public Health  
<https://www.bouldercounty.org/families/disease/covid-19/>
3. Johns Hopkins University of Medicine  
<https://coronavirus.jhu.edu/>
4. Short Wave, NPR science podcast, episode explaining Social Distancing  
<https://www.npr.org/2020/03/19/818567188/keep-your-distance>

Contact Boulder Food Rescue  
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