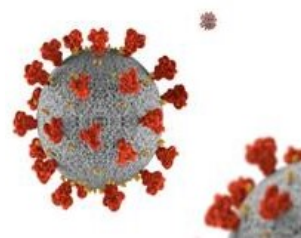


## Do I need to sanitize my food packages? And answers to other questions about food and COVID-19

Prevent  
the  
Spread of  
COVID-19



*Q: Can I get COVID-19 from food?*

**A: From what we know so far, the virus does not seem to be spread through food.**

**The coronavirus is primarily spread person-to-person through respiratory droplets.**

Probably the riskiest part of our food supply right now is in-person grocery shopping. Not because the food or stores themselves are unsafe, but because grocery shopping increases person-to-person contact. It is not always possible or practical to keep the recommended six feet away from others in a store.

*Q: Do I need to sanitize my food packages?*

**A: Cleaning and sanitizing food packages is probably not needed in most situations.**

According to the CDC, 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.** Coronaviruses can remain on surfaces for hours or days, but they can survive in the air for up to three hours.

*Q: Should I be worried about food shortages?*

**A: There seems to be no food shortages now or in the immediate future.**

Some grocery stores or communities may have low stock of some food items. Most high-demand foods are restocked within a week. Hoarding large amounts of food can place a burden on your neighbors and your pocketbook. **Buying more groceries than you need for two weeks can cause shortages and hardship for other community members.** Many stores are not allowing returns of any products purchased during this outbreak.

*Q: How much food should I have on hand?*

**A: It is not a bad idea to have two weeks of food.**

**You and others can be spreading COVID-19 for up to 14 days with zero symptoms.** Staying at home for 2 weeks won't stop the spread of COVID-19, but it can help. And you may need to follow special precautions for several weeks if someone in your household has COVID-19 symptoms, is diagnosed or is being monitored for the disease. If you do go grocery shopping, protect yourself and others by:

- Wash hands with soap and water before and after shopping; use hand sanitizer as a backup if soap and water are not available
- Wipe down the grocery cart handle bar
- Stay six feet away from others and wear a cloth face covering

# What Does 14 Days of Food Look Like?

FEMA recommends households consider having a two week food supply. It is unlikely any emergency would disrupt access to food for that amount of time but can still be a good idea. Fortunately, the risk of losing power or water is low at this time. Meal planning, shopping and cooking can be challenging, but manageable for most people. Below are some resources to help you out.

## Two Weeks of Menus, Shopping List, and Recipes

The USDA has developed a sample two-week menu for a family of four complete with shopping lists, pantry staples list and recipes. <https://www.choosemyplate.gov/eathealthy/budget/budget-sample-two-week-menus>

The menus are based on the USDA Thrifty Food Plan which is used for determining SNAP benefits but can be used by anyone wanting to follow a generally healthy eating plan on a modest budget. And there is no need to feel deprived. Recipes include Honey Lemon Chicken, Polenta with Pepper and Cheese, White Chili, Perfect Pumpkin Pancakes, and Marinated Beef.

The menus are designed for generally healthy individuals. If you have specific dietary needs or concerns, you may prefer to design your own two-week menu. Here are resources for planning your weekly meals and making a grocery list at: <https://www.choosemyplate.gov/eathealthy/budget>.

## Emergency Preparedness Resources

Ready.gov has resources on preparing a food supply for emergencies: <https://www.ready.gov/food>

## How Long Is Food Safe To Eat?

### What Do Those Dates on Food Packages Mean?

Another recommendation is to use what you already have in your cupboard. Knowing about safe food storage times and food dating can help reduce food waste and keep food safe.

<https://choosemyplate-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/misc/FoodProductDating.pdf>

The FoodKeeper App was developed by USDA's with Cornell University and the Food Marketing Institute. You can search for foods and get storage information to help them keep fresher longer. There is also a mobile app for Android and Apple devices:

<https://www.foodsafety.gov/keep-food-safe/foodkeeper-app>



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