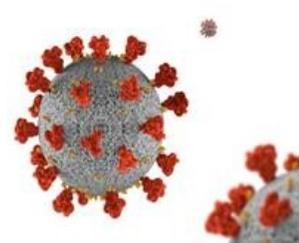


Safe Grocery Shopping Strategies To Slow the Spread of COVID-19!

Prevent
the
Spread of
COVID-19



Minimize Trips, Minimize Number of Stores, Minimize Exposure

Fewer trips to fewer stores minimize the risk of becoming infected and infecting others. The virus appears to move easily from one person to another. It's contagious. Stay at home means stay at home. This sounds easier in theory than it is in practice. Americans are used to shopping when they want to rather than when there are definite needs. It may be very tempting to get out of the house. When you do, you place yourself, your family, and others at a greater risk of contracting or spreading COVID-19. Change your shopping strategy to once a week or even better every [two weeks preferably at one store or find ways to use what is already in your cupboard](#).

Avoid shopping altogether if you:

- Are at higher risk for serious complications of COVID-19,
- Have been in contact with someone diagnosed with COVID-19, or
- Are ill with a fever, coughing or have gastrointestinal symptoms (diarrhea).

Ask neighbors to help with your shopping, order food and other products on-line or reach out to community organizations. If you must shop and are at-risk, check with a store about special hours which are generally in the early morning.

Five Steps to Safe Shopping During the Pandemic

1. Focus on Your Hands When Entering and Leaving the Store

Hand washing is best. Stores often have public restrooms. Start and finish your shopping trip with hand washing. Before exiting the store, wash your hands and if available use a paper towel to open the restroom door and another to push your cart to the car. Use hand sanitizers if you're unable to wash. It is not necessary or recommended to use hand sanitizer if good handwashing practices are used.

2. Sanitize Cart Handles

Use disinfecting wipes available from the store or bring your own. Although the virus that causes COVID-19 can stay on surfaces for hours, research suggests the virus is easily wiped away with common disinfectants.

3. Practice Social Distancing

Maintain six feet of separation. That's about two shopping cart lengths between you and other shoppers and in line for check-out. If this is hard to do, the CDC recommends wearing a cloth face covering but it must be [used properly](#) to be effective. And they should never be used on children younger than **2** years or anyone who would not be able to remove it themselves if they are having trouble breathing.

4. Use Single Use Bags Provided by the Store.

Although it is highly unlikely that the virus spreads this way, some stores are restricting reusable grocery bags. If you are able and do use them, [wash the bags after you return home](#). This is a good practice at any time.

5. Returning Home with Groceries and Supplies

After shopping, take bags to one space in your home. Wash your hands. Put food away and then clean and sanitize the surface the bags were placed on. From what we know at this time about how COVID-19 spreads, getting the virus from touching food packages is probably low. Know how, when and what sanitizers and disinfectants to use to help control COVID-19.

How Do We Know These Shopping Strategies Help to Keep Your Family Safe?

How the Virus that Causes COVID-19 Makes Us Sick

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) indicate most transmission of COVID-19 is from breathing in airborne droplets (coughing/sneezing) from infected people. The virus that causes COVID-19, like other viruses, needs a human host. Once the COVID-19 virus enters our body, it binds with respiratory cells to produce more viruses leading to infection. Even people who are not showing symptoms can be infected and can be silently spreading the disease.

These Strategies Have Worked For Similar Viruses

The virus that causes COVID-19 is similar to the two viruses which have caused widespread illness in the past: Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS). Practices such as social distancing, hand washing and sanitizing and cleaning and disinfecting surfaces worked with MERS and SARS and they work now.



Hand washing—along with cleaning, sanitizing and disinfecting surfaces—is effective because it physically alters the virus. The virus that causes COVID-19 has a protective covering called an envelope. Soap and commonly available disinfectants, including household bleach disrupt the covering preventing infection. [But it is important to know when and how to use these products.](#)

What We Know and What We Don't Know

The first known case of COVID-19 in the United States was confirmed in late January 2020. Around the world, scientists are working to find ways to treat and prevent COVID-19 infections.

There are many things we don't know. For instance, scientists have begun to explore what happens when airborne droplets containing the virus settle on surfaces and when infected people touch surfaces. There may be a risk of transmission to others from surfaces especially in areas with widespread cases of COVID-19.

As you read and listen to new information, you may notice phrases such as “seems to be spreading”, “at this time”, and “it may be possible”. That's because recommendations are based on past, current and emerging science related to the pandemic and spread of COVID-19.

Science evolves and the treatment and prevention of COVID-19 is evolving as well. Be patient and choose your sources of information carefully. If you focus on the basics and latest recommendations from the CDC, you'll be doing your best to keep yourself, your family and your community safe. These recommendations won't guarantee illness will be prevented but they may help slow the spread.



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