COVID-19 AND FOOD SAFETY FAQ

IS CORONAVIRUS A CONCERN AT GROCERY STORES?

CDC, FDA and USDA are not aware of any reports at this time that suggest COVID-19 can be transmitted by food or food packaging. Current evidence shows the biggest risk of transmission of COVID-19 is being around individuals who are symptomatic (and to a lesser extent, infected but not showing symptoms). Food businesses should follow employee health policies and local health department recommendations to keep these individuals home.

CAN I GET SICK WITH COVID-19 FROM TOUCHING FOOD OR PACKAGING IF THE CORONAVIRUS WAS PRESENT ON IT?

- There is no indication that food packaging material has served in significant connection to virus transmission.
- If concerned, handling of food packaging can be followed with handwashing and/or using hand sanitizer.

WHAT STEPS CAN I TAKE TO MINIMIZE RISK WHEN SHOPPING AT THE GROCERY STORE?

- Use hand sanitizer when entering stores, and wash hands and/or use sanitizer as soon as possible after leaving.
- Maintain 6 feet of distance between yourself and others while shopping.
- Avoid touching surfaces or items unnecessarily and avoid touching your mouth, nose or face.
- Do not go shopping when showing symptoms or think you have been exposed to the virus.

HOW SHOULD PRODUCE BE HANDLED?

- Consider using hand sanitizer before and after selecting produce items.
- Avoid touching multiple produce items when making selections.
- As per good food handling practices in general, wash your hands before food preparation or eating, avoid touching your face and consider supplementing handwashing with the use of hand sanitizer.

WHAT IS MY GROCERY STORE DOING TO MINIMIZE MY RISK?

- Many stores are following CDC guidelines for cleaning and disinfection. Some are limiting hours to allow for additional cleaning and disinfection.
- Stores may also provide hand sanitizer to customers and ask sick employees or customers to leave.

Information courtesy of NC State University and NC State Extension. Stay informed at: https://www.tn.gov/agriculture/topic/covid-19-response-and-resources.html