

COVID-19 AND FOOD SAFETY FAQ

IS CORONAVIRUS A CONCERN ON FRESH PRODUCE?

CDC, FDA and USDA are not aware of any reports at this time of human illnesses that suggest coronavirus can be transmitted by food or food packaging. However, it is always important to follow good hygiene practices (i.e., wash hands and surfaces often, separate raw meat from other foods, cook to the right temperature, refrigerate foods promptly) when handling or preparing foods.

IS THERE GOING TO BE A PRODUCE SHORTAGE IN THE UNITED STATES?

- There is no shortage of food in the United States, although local stores may not have normal inventory while supply chains adjust.

SHOULD I TAKE ANY PRECAUTIONS WHILE EATING FRESH PRODUCE?

- COVID-19 is not known to be caused from eating contaminated food, so safety of fresh produce should not be a concern relative to this new virus.
- Follow good food safety practices whenever preparing, storing, or consuming foods.

SHOULD PRODUCE BE WASHED BEFORE EATING? SHOULD SOAP OR A DISINFECTANT BE USED?

- Washing produce before consumption is always a good practice.
- Produce should be washed or soaked in cool running water.
- It is **not** recommended to wash produce with dish soap or any detergent.
- It is **not** recommended to treat produce with chemical disinfectants at home.

COULD EATING FRESH PRODUCE THAT HAS BEEN CONTAMINATED CAUSE COVID-19?

- There is no evidence that the virus that causes COVID-19 is spread by eating food that might inadvertently contain small amounts of virus.
- Produce has not been identified as a risk factor in the transmission of other respiratory virus outbreaks.

WHAT HAPPENS IN YOUR BODY IF YOU DO INGEST CORONAVIRUS THROUGH FOOD?

- Currently, there is no evidence to support transmission of the virus directly by eating food that might inadvertently contain virus.
- Coronaviruses are generally thought to be spread from person-to-person through respiratory droplets. It may be possible for a person to get COVID-19 by touching a contaminated surface or object and then touching their mouth, eyes, or nose, but this is not thought to be the major way the virus is transmitted.
- In commercial food production, processing, and preparation, there are many best practices that are routinely followed as per federal, state, and local regulations. Regulations are designed to prevent foods from becoming contaminated with microbes from the environment, including viruses.

