

COVID-19: Information for Food Premises Operators/Business Owners

On March 17, 2020, the Government of Ontario declared an emergency under s 7.0.1 (1) of the *Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act*. As a result of this declaration, a number of establishments are required to close immediately.

As a food premises operator your business may be impacted by the closure of the following:

- All bars and restaurants, except to the extent that such facilities provide takeout food and delivery;
- All theatres including those offering live performances of music, dance, and other art forms, as well as cinemas that show movies; and
- Concert venues

This means that if you operate a food premises you are not permitted to provide a dine-in option. Your establishment can remain open only if you can provide take-out or delivery options limiting social interactions between people.

If your establishment chooses to provide take out and/or delivery options for customers the following must be considered:

- To protect your staff and customers you cannot allow customers to wait inside the premises for food orders to be ready. As an alternative, you could have customers:
 - Wait in car until you text or call.
 - Give a time for them to come and pick-up (remember to space out pick-up times).
 - Call them 5 minutes before order is complete.
- Have customers call in take-out orders.
- Limit the number of customers placing take-out orders inside the premises.
- Take food order to the car.
- Do contactless deliveries. This is where you just leave the food delivery at the person's front door and don't interact with the customer; payment can be made over the phone or by e-transfer.
- Or any other method of providing food to customers that limits social interactions between people.

Consider your food inventory and if you will be able to use items in a timely manner. If this is a concern, you can get together with other food premises to come up with a way to use the inventory or donate it to a local food bank or shelter. Ensure to follow proper food safety procedures for packing and transporting. If food has perished ensure that you are discarding food in a safe manner.

As an operator or business owner you must continue to follow [good hygiene practices](#) and infection control practices to ensure:

- Employees are not coming to work sick.
- Staff are washing hands frequently to minimize the chance of getting infected.
- Regular and routine cleaning and disinfecting of the facility, especially high touch surfaces and objects.

Frequently asked questions and answers

Q: Can I become sick with coronavirus (COVID-19) from food?

A: COVID-19 is transmitted via droplets during close, unprotected contact. Airborne spread has not been documented for COVID-19. There is no evidence that COVID 19 is spread via food or water. 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, and refrigerate foods promptly) when handling or preparing foods.

Q: Are meat products compromised by the Coronavirus?

A: There is no evidence that COVID-19 is 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, and refrigerate foods promptly) when handling or preparing foods.

Q: Can I get sick with COVID-19 from touching food, the food packaging, or food contact surfaces, if the coronavirus was present on it?

A: Currently there is no evidence of food or food packaging being associated with transmission of COVID-19. Like other viruses, it is possible that the virus that causes COVID-19 can survive on surfaces or objects. For that reason, it is critical to follow the 4 key steps of food safety — [clean, separate, cook, and chill](#).

If you have any questions please contact Huron Perth Public Health by email at inspections@hpph.ca. Due to the high volume of calls email is the best method. However if you are unable to email you can contact us at 1-888-221-2133 press 1, and then ext. 2069.