

COVID-19 FAQ FOR GROCERY STORES RECEIVING AND FOOD PACKAGING

CAN COVID-19 BE SPREAD THROUGH FOOD?

- Transmission of COVID-19 through food, food packages or even food handlers has not been identified as a risk factor for this illness
- Evidence suggests it may remain viable for hours to days on surfaces. CDC recommends cleaning followed by disinfection as a best practice for prevention of COVID-19.

IS IT SAFE TO ACCEPT FOOD FROM COUNTRIES OR STATES IMPACTED BY COVID-19?

- With decades of data related to influenza, another similar respiratory virus, there is no data to indicate that food distribution channels like grocery stores or distribution warehouses are transmission nodes.
- There is no history of a public health authority advise individuals to stop shopping for food at certain stores due to the risk of respiratory virus transmission.
- Currently, there is no data to suggest that accepting food from an area experiencing this illness is a risk factor for disease spread.

SHOULD FOOD PACKAGES BE CLEANED BEFORE THEY ARE USED?

- Continue routine operating procedures in evaluating the integrity of packaging as well as for any soil are already in place.
- Follow risk management practices including hand hygiene regimens of washing coupled with sanitizing (using an alcohol-based sanitizer, as per CDC's guidance).

IF WE WANT TO CLEAN AND DISINFECT, WHAT SHOULD BE USED?

- CDC advises using compounds on the list of EPA recommended disinfectants, which can be found at: go.ncsu.edu/epacovid-19
 - (Note: this list is based on current data, but compounds are not yet validated for inactivation of the virus causing COVID-19)
- Bleach may be used to disinfect surfaces, but the concentration is higher than for everyday sanitation: 5 tablespoons bleach per gallon of water

