

Protecting Yourself and Your Loved Ones

The Centers for Disease Control is your best resource for accurate information about Covid 19:
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

This is a demonstration of how germs spread through what we touch:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I5-dI74zxPg>

This video demonstrates how to wash hands completely:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2YuDWCX3OkM>

This is an article by someone who successfully figured out how to keep herself safe from germs:
[Here's how I avoided all viral illness after my bone marrow transplant, and how you can, too.](#)



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Here's how I avoided all viral illness after my bone marrow transplant, ...

A.M. Carter

Everyone is scared of COVID-19 (the disease caused by novel coronavirus). I get it. I've been in the hospital a ...

You might want to have everyone in the household watch the videos and read the article.

These are two videos by a doctor regarding safe storage of groceries brought in from outside the household. (The second is a quick follow-up, with an update to some of the information he gave.)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sjDuwc9KBps&frags=pl%2Cwn>

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4A_1h4XpMes&frags=pl%2Cwn

This is a summary and update of the videos about storage of groceries. (Notes from other experts are in parentheses.)

While you're at the store

1. Wipe down the entire shopping cart, not just the handle, with an antiseptic wipe.
2. Only touch items you are going to buy.
3. [Avoid shopping in person](#) if you've been exposed to COVID-19, have symptoms, or are older than 60 years old.

([The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has said](#) people aged 65 and older are at higher risk for serious illness from COVID-19.)

Bringing groceries into your home

VanWingen recommends leaving your groceries outside in a garage or porch for three days, space and weather permitting. This applies to groceries delivered to your home, too.

(These extra precautions should not be applied to refrigerated or frozen items.)

CDC: [How coronavirus spreads](#)

Sterilizing your surface

VanWingen showed a method called sterile technique, which is used in health care to prevent contamination.

Determine a clean side and dirty side of your table or counter where the groceries will be unloaded. Sanitize the clean half with a disinfectant and put your groceries on the dirty side of table.

“Imagine that the groceries that you have are covered with some glitter, and your goal at the end of this is to not have any glitter in your house, on your hands, or especially on your face,” VanWingen said. “Imagine that disinfectants and soap have the power to dissolve that glitter.”

Saturate a towel or rag with disinfectant and wipe down all of the items. Spend extra time cleaning areas you know other people touched, such as milk jug handles. Once your groceries are put away, sanitize the dirty surface.

(A [study done by National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases](#) showed that the virus can live on plastic and stainless steel for three days and on cardboard for 24 hours but “there is currently no evidence of food or food packaging being associated with transmission of COVID-19,” [according to the Food and Drug Administration](#).)

Cleaning and sanitizing groceries

VanWingen recommends discarding all external packaging.

If you have bagged produce, two people can help store the items. One person can open the refrigerator door and the other can dump in the fruits and vegetables.

Bread, rolls and chips can be put in sterile containers and the bags should be discarded. The same goes for cereal and snacks in cardboard boxes.

(Other scientists have [suggested simply putting your groceries](#) away and then washing your hands with soap and water or hand sanitizing. They also urge you to [wash your hands before making a meal and before eating a meal.](#))

(VanWingen [posted a follow-up video saying he erred in his recommendation](#) to wash fruits and vegetables in soapy water. He now advises that fruits and vegetables should be rinsed in cold, running water because it is not safe to ingest household dish soaps.)

When you get food delivered

If you're ordering takeout, the same precautions apply: wash your hands, plate your food, and get rid of all unnecessary containers. Hot takeout food is safer because it has a kill step of being put in the oven or microwave.

More: [How long does the coronavirus live on surfaces?](#)

FDA's guidelines for food safety

The FDA has [four basic steps for food safety](#).

1. Clean

Always wash your food, hands, counters, and cooking tools.

- Wash hands in warm soapy water for at least 20 seconds. Do this before and after touching food.
- Wash your cutting boards, dishes, forks, spoons, knives, and counter tops with hot soapy water. Do this after working with each food item.
- Rinse fruits and veggies.
- Clean the lids on canned goods before opening.

2. Separate (Keep Apart)

Keep raw foods to themselves. Germs can spread from one food to another.

- Keep raw meat, poultry, seafood, and eggs away from other foods. Do this in your shopping cart, bags, and fridge.

- Do not reuse marinades used on raw foods unless you bring them to a boil first.
- Use a special cutting board or plate for raw foods only.

3. Cook

Foods need to get hot and stay hot. Heat kills germs.

- Cook to safe temperatures (Beef, Pork, Lamb 145 °F; Fish 145 °F; Ground Beef, Pork, Lamb 160 °F; Turkey, Chicken, Duck 165 °F)
- Use a food thermometer to make sure that food is done. You can't always tell by looking.

4. Chill

Put food in the fridge right away.

- 2-Hour Rule: Put foods in the fridge or freezer within 2 hours after cooking or buying from the store. Do this within 1 hour if it is 90 degrees or hotter outside.
- Never thaw food by simply taking it out of the fridge. Thaw food (in the fridge, under cold water, in the microwave, marinate foods in the fridge)

Wearing Face Masks

The current recommendation is to wear homemade cloth masks, so that the professional Personal Protective Equipment can be reserved for medical professionals and other first responders. There are several reasons for wearing a face mask when out in public:

- It may protect others from the droplets you exhale. (Some people who carry the virus do not have any symptoms and, thus, don't realize that they are spreading the germs.)
- It may protect you from droplets in the air. (Note: Homemade cloth masks do not filter out the finer droplets as efficiently as medical-grade Personal Protective Equipment, so you still need to observe the physical distance guidelines.)
- It can help you remember to not touch your face until after you have washed your hands.