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GUIDANCE TO PREVENT COVID-19

Face Coverings, Businesses, Grocery Stores/Food, Children, Animals

FACE COVERINGS/MASKS

The CDC and MDHHS now recommend that the general public wear a face covering when venturing outside of your homes to help stop the spread of COVID-19. While we should all continue to stay home unless absolutely necessary and practice social distancing and proper hygiene, wearing a face cover is an additional precaution if you must go out in public.

The CDC has guidance on [using cloth face coverings](#), how to [wear, clean, and make](#) a cloth face covering, as well as some [frequently asked questions](#) about cloth face coverings.

MDHHS also has some answers to [frequently asked questions regarding face coverings](#):

What is a face covering?

- A face covering is any well-secured cloth (like a bandana or scarf) that covers your mouth and nose.
- A face covering is different from a surgical or N95 mask which must be reserved for healthcare workers.

Who should and should not wear a face covering?

Cloth face coverings **should not** be placed on:

- young children under age 2,
- anyone who has trouble breathing, is unconscious, incapacitated, and
- anyone otherwise unable to remove the mask without assistance.

Cloth face coverings **should** be worn by:

- All others when they need to be outside their home and within 6 feet of others.
- People who are sick should wear a face covering while at home if they cannot maintain at least 6 feet of distance from others.
- People who are sick and who need to leave home, such as to get urgent medical care, should always wear a face covering.

Do I need to wear a face covering all the time when outside my house?

- **If you are sick**, yes. Remember you must stay home if you are sick and only leave for essential medical care. Arrange for essential items, like groceries, to be delivered to you through a delivery service or through friends or family.

- **If you are not sick**, you should wear a face covering whenever you need to leave home and might be closer than 6 feet from others. Examples include using public transportation, riding in a taxi or car service, walking on a busy street, going to pharmacies and grocery stores, and going to the doctor or a hospital.
- **Essential workers** should also wear a face covering at work when they cannot maintain at least 6 feet of distance between themselves and others.

Do I need to wear a face covering when I am exercising?

No — as long as you maintain at least 6 feet from others.

People should only do exercises that allow them keep physical distance from others. Walking, running, and biking outside are good examples of activities that do not require shared equipment or close contact with others.

I was confirmed to have COVID-19 and am better now. Do I still need to wear a face covering?

Yes – everyone that is able should wear a face covering when outside of their home and it is not possible to maintain at least 6 feet of distance between others. Social distancing is still necessary, even when using a face covering.

We don't yet know how long the virus remains in a person's body, or whether it is possible to get sick again. Using facemasks in public and practicing social distancing is still important for people who were sick and recovered.

Remember if you had or may have had COVID-19, you should not leave the house except for essential medical care or to get essential needs until all the following are true:

- It has been at least 7 days since your symptoms started or since you tested positive for COVID-19 **and**
- You have been fever-free for the last 3 days without taking fever-reducing drugs such as Tylenol or ibuprofen **and**
- Your overall illness has improved (for example, when your cough or shortness of breath have improved).

Why is this being recommended now?

As we learn more about COVID-19, sometimes recommendations change. There is increasing evidence that people without symptoms may be able to spread the virus, and that droplets produced when breathing, speaking, or singing may spread COVID-19 from person to person.

This evidence informed the decision to recommend face coverings. The use of face coverings is one simpler tool that may help reduce the spread of the virus – especially from people who are infected and don't know it yet.

How often do I need to wash my face covering?

If you are using a cloth face covering, we recommend washing once a day by hand or machine using detergent. The face covering should be fully dry before using. You should have a couple of face coverings so you can rotate for washing.

Are there precautions I should take with my face covering?

- In taking on and off a face covering, you will likely touch your face. As such, please wash your hands with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and warm

water are not available, use an alcohol-based sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol every time before and after removing or putting on your mask.

- Do not put a used face covering in places where others can touch them or where germs trapped in your face covering can touch other surfaces, such as counter tops or your kitchen table.
- Do not throw your face covering loose in a bag or backpack. We recommend keeping a paper bag with you to store your face covering if you will be taking it off outside your house.

Is it possible to make your own face covering?

Yes! A face covering can be a scarf, bandana or other cloth. Watch [this video](#) from the U.S. Attorney General to see ideas about creating a face covering with household items.

What is the best fabric for a mask?

Use tightly woven cotton, such as quilting fabric or cotton sheets.

Are medical grade masks such as N95 or surgical masks better than homemade masks?

Medical grade masks need to be saved for use by health care providers only. Use of homemade masks for people with lower risk exposure is a good way to decrease the chance of exposure to COVID-19.

BUSINESSES

There is much confusion and concern about the small businesses within our 10-county jurisdiction and whether some should be operating while Michigan is under an Executive Order to Stay at Home.

MDHHS has issued [guidance for businesses](#) to follow that may answer some of your questions. If you are a business that is still operating due to being considered critical infrastructure, DHD#10 has a [Business Toolkit](#) available to help you screen employees and implement social distancing measures. Information in this toolkit is not a requirement for businesses, but a recommendation to help businesses prevent potential spread of COVID-19 in their workplaces.

Recently, three neighboring local public health departments issued Emergency Orders for businesses still in operation to follow in an effort to control the COVID-19 pandemic. These health departments include: [Health Department of Northwest](#), [Benzie-Leelanau District Health Department](#), and [District Health Department #4](#). If you own or operate a business located in one of these three jurisdictions, please follow the necessary mandates and reach out to the appropriate health department with any questions. **District Health Department #10 DOES NOT have an Emergency Order in place within our jurisdiction for businesses still operating.**

If you have a complaint about a business that is operating but not considered critical infrastructure, there are a couple of things you can do:

1. Contact your **911 dispatch center's NON-EMERGENCY number** to report your concern. Of course, we do not want to inundate local law enforcement with non-emergency issues, but if you believe your concern is justified, call the non-emergency

number for the 911 dispatch center that covers your area. [Check here](#) for the dispatch center in your county.

2. [File a complaint](#) at the **Michigan Attorney General's office**. The AG website states that they are prioritizing complaints related to the COVID-19 outbreak now.

GROCERY STORES/FOOD

DHD#10 is getting calls from concerned individuals who report that some grocery store workers are not wearing gloves or other protective gear when stocking shelves or touching produce.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has some guidance that may ease concerns.

Can I get COVID-19 from food, food packaging, or food containers and preparation area?

Currently there is no evidence of food, food containers, 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 are concerned about contamination of food or food packaging, wash your hands after handling food packaging, after removing food from the packaging, before you prepare food for eating and before you eat. Consumers can follow [CDC guidelines on frequent hand washing](#) with soap and water for at least 20 seconds; and frequent cleaning and disinfecting of surfaces.

Can I get COVID-19 from a food worker handling my food?

Currently, there is no evidence of food or food packaging being associated with transmission of COVID-19. However, the virus that causes COVID-19 is spreading from person-to-person in some communities in the U.S. The CDC recommends that if you are sick, stay home until you are better and no longer pose a risk of infecting others.

Anyone handling, preparing and serving food should always follow [safe food handling procedures](#), such as washing hands and surfaces often.

Should food facilities (grocery stores, manufacturing facilities, restaurants, etc.) perform any special cleaning or sanitation procedures for COVID-19?

CDC recommends routine cleaning of all frequently touched surfaces in the workplace, such as workstations, countertops, and doorknobs. Use the cleaning agents that are usually used in these areas and follow the directions on the label. CDC does not recommend any additional disinfection beyond routine cleaning at this time.

View the current [list of products that meet EPA's criteria for use against SARS-CoV-2](#), the cause of COVID-19.

Restaurants and retail food establishments are regulated at the state and local level. State, local, and tribal regulators use the [Food Code](#) published by the FDA to develop or update their own food safety rules. Generally, FDA-regulated food manufacturers are required to maintain clean facilities, including, as appropriate, clean and sanitized food contact surfaces, and to have food safety plans in place. Food safety plans include a hazards analysis and risk-based preventive controls and include procedures for maintaining clean and sanitized

facilities and food contact surfaces. See: [FSMA Final Rule for Preventive Controls for Human Food](#).

Should employees in retail food and food production settings wear face coverings to prevent exposure to COVID-19?

On April 3, the CDC released an updated [recommendation](#) regarding the use of cloth face coverings to help slow the spread of COVID-19. CDC recommends the use of simple cloth face coverings as a voluntary public health measure in public settings where other social distancing measures are difficult to maintain (e.g., grocery stores and pharmacies).

For workers on farms, and in food production, processing, and retail settings who do not typically wear masks as part of their jobs, *consider* the following if you choose to use a cloth face covering to slow the spread of COVID-19:

- Maintain face coverings in accordance with parameters in [FDA's Model Food Code](#) sections 4-801.11 Clean Linens and 4.802.11 Specifications.
- Launder reusable face coverings before each daily use.
- CDC also has [additional information on the use of face coverings](#), including washing instructions and information on how to make homemade face covers.

NOTE: The cloth face coverings recommended by CDC are not surgical masks or N-95 respirators. Those are critical supplies that must continue to be reserved for healthcare workers and other medical first responders, as recommended by current CDC guidance.

How and when should workers in food retail and processing wear gloves during a pandemic?

FDA's Food Code recommendations for hand washing and glove use in food service and retail food stores have not changed as a result of the pandemic. ([Food Code 2017](#) Section 2-301.11). Per the FDA Food Code: with limited exceptions, employees may not contact exposed, ready-to-eat foods with their bare hands and shall use suitable utensils such as deli tissue, spatulas, tongs, single use-gloves, or dispensing equipment ([Food Code 2017](#) Section 3-301.11). Gloves are not a substitute for hand washing or hand hygiene.

If your task requires direct contact with ready-to-eat food, wash your hands and the exposed portions of your arms for 20 seconds prior to donning gloves and before touching food or food-contact surfaces. Wash your hands immediately after removing gloves.

How do I handle self-service food buffets such as a salad bars in a retail setting related to COVID-19?

Restaurants and retail food establishments are regulated at the state and local level. State, local, and tribal regulators use the [Food Code](#) published by the FDA to develop or update their own food safety rules. Again, there is no current evidence to support the transmission of COVID-19 associated with food or food packaging.

It may be possible that a person can get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching their mouth, nose, or possibly eyes, but this is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads. The coronavirus is mostly spread from one person to another through respiratory droplets. However, it's always critical to follow the 4 key steps of food safety—clean, separate, cook, and chill—to prevent foodborne illness.

As an extra precaution to help avoid the transmission of COVID-19 through surface contact, we recommend frequent washing and sanitizing of all food contact surfaces and utensils. Food-service workers also must practice frequent hand washing and glove changes before and after preparing food. Include frequent cleaning and sanitizing of counters and condiment containers. Consumers should wash their hands after using serving utensils.

In communities with sustained transmission of COVID-19, state and local health authorities have implemented social-distancing measures which discourage or prohibit dining in congregate settings. We also recommend discontinuing self-service buffets and salad bars until these measures are lifted.

Unlike foodborne gastrointestinal (GI) viruses like norovirus and hepatitis A that often make people ill through contaminated food, SARS-CoV-2, which causes COVID-19, is a virus that causes respiratory illness. Foodborne exposure to this virus is not known to be a route of transmission.

CHILDREN

Now that school is out for the rest of the year, there are several things parents and caregivers can do to keep children healthy.

The CDC has some wonderful guidance on [caring for children](#) during this pandemic and [talking to children](#) about COVID-19.

MDHHS also provides guidance for [communicating with children](#) during the COVID-19 outbreak. This guidance covers:

1. Introduction/ Resources for caregivers and families
2. Starting the conversation
3. Anticipated questions from children about COVID-19
4. Helping kids cope with stress and worry / Creating a safe and nurturing home
5. Activities to try while staying home
6. Comic book activity

ANIMALS

Our animals are part of the family and we want to be sure they are also protected. With this new virus, there is still much to learn about the potential impact on animals and if they can get the virus and/or spread it to others.

The CDC offers [valuable information](#) on this topic, including the risk of animals spreading COVID-19 to people or people spreading it to animals, how to protect pets if you are sick, and how to stay healthy around animals. The CDC also has a [Frequently Asked Questions](#) section specific to animals.

The Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development also has [guidance](#) regarding COVID-19 and animals, in particular when it comes to farms, farmers, livestock, and pets.