



## **COVID-19 Information for the Canadian Produce Sector**

Scientific evidence currently shows no indication that COVID-19 is a foodborne illness. Evidence does, however, show that the virus can be transmitted via contact (with an infected person, surface or object) or droplets (from an infected individual coughing, sneezing or talking).

CPMA highly encourages all produce businesses across the supply chain to thoroughly consult the Government resources offered below. It is critical to follow verified, fact-based Government guidance during these times. Please remain vigilant in your daily food safety business practices.

### **Food Safety**

Food safety, personal hygiene and equipment cleaning should always be top of mind when handling food. This is particularly true in the case of fresh fruits and vegetables, where it is common practice to consume products that are raw or minimally processed.

### **Government of Canada Resources for Food Safety**

[Health Canada](#)'s website provides consumers with information on how to shop for, handle, store and prepare your produce, and all food, in a responsible manner. They also provide information for employees of produce sellers on personal hygiene and equipment procedures to help reduce risks for the consumer.

### **Health Canada Links**

- [Health Canada - Produce safety](#)
- [Health Canada - Food safety and you](#)
- [Health Canada - General food safety tips](#)
- [Health Canada - Food Safety Fact Sheets and Infographics](#)

### **Government of Canada Resources**

- [Coronavirus disease \(COVID-19\): Outbreak update](#)
- [Coronavirus disease \(COVID-19\): Being prepared](#)
- [Coronavirus disease \(COVID-19\): Awareness resources](#)
  - Note: Information sheets are available in PDF Format in over 25 languages via the [Government of Ontario](#)
- [Coronavirus disease \(COVID-19\): Vulnerable populations and COVID-19](#)
- [Coronavirus disease \(COVID-19\): How to isolate at home when you have COVID-19](#)
- [About coronavirus disease \(COVID-19\)](#)
- [Know the facts about coronavirus disease \(COVID-19\)](#)
- [Coronavirus disease \(COVID-19\): Be prepared factsheet](#)
- [Public Health Agency of Canada \(PHAC\) - Emergency preparedness and response](#)
- [Canadian Food Inspection Agency \(CFIA\) - Food recall warnings and allergy alerts](#)

### **United States Government Updates**

Experts in the United States state there is no evidence to suggest any threat to food safety. The [U.S. Food and Drug Administration \(FDA\)](#) and [U.S. Department of Agriculture \(USDA\)](#) have now included relevant statements in their FAQs ([FDA / USDA](#)). The Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) and U.S. [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#) are coordinating responses where possible.

### **Statement from the CDC Website**

Can the virus that causes COVID-19 be spread through food, including refrigerated or frozen food?

“Coronaviruses are generally thought to be spread from person-to-person through respiratory droplets. Currently there is no evidence to support transmission of COVID-19 associated with food. Before preparing or eating food it is important to always wash your hands with soap and water for 20 seconds for general food safety. Throughout the day wash your hands after blowing your nose, coughing or sneezing, or going to the bathroom.

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 own mouth, nose, or possibly their eyes, but this is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads.

In general, because of poor survivability of these coronaviruses on surfaces, there is likely very low risk of spread from food products or packaging that are shipped over a period of days or weeks at ambient, refrigerated, or frozen temperatures.”

Learn what is known by the CDC about the [spread of COVID-19](#).

### **Resources from the European Union (EU)**

- Information from [European Food Safety Authority \(EFSA\)](#)

Please direct any further questions relating to food safety practices to Jeff Hall, CPMA Food Safety Specialist, at [jhall@cpma.ca](mailto:jhall@cpma.ca)

For any general questions regarding COVID-19 in relation to the produce industry, please contact Allan Gordon, CPMA Manager, Communications, at [agordon@cpma.ca](mailto:agordon@cpma.ca).

