

## **Guidance for Safe Food Handling for voluntary groups during COVID-19 (Coronavirus) pandemic 27/03/20**

### **Essential Information**

#### **Do**

- Wash your hands with soap and water often – do this for at least 20 seconds.
- Use hand sanitiser gel if soap and water are not available.
- Do this after you blow your nose, sneeze or cough, and after you eat or handle food.
- Wash your hands as soon as you get back home.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve (not your hands) when you cough or sneeze.
- Put used tissues in the bin immediately and wash your hands afterwards.
- Volunteers should ensure they have a low chance of becoming infected.
- Avoid close contact with people who have symptoms.
- Where possible, follow social distancing protocol: try to keep 2 metres (3 steps) away from each other.

#### **Don't**

- Do not touch your eyes, nose or mouth if your hands are not clean.
- Do not distribute food to other people in the community if you have symptoms (fever or dry persistent cough).

### **Providing food – receipt, preparation, cooking and delivery**

- If someone shows symptoms, they must stop work immediately, go home and trace all contact they had with at risk people.
- Check the safety of the products delivered - packaging is sealed and the temperature of product on delivery, eg frozen foods have not defrosted.
- Sacks of bulk goods can be decanted into new/clean plastic Ziploc bags. Seal the bags and label with product name, best before date from original pack and list any allergens. Ideally, also write on bag or tell recipient how long the product will keep now the original pack has been opened (no need if the food is going to be consumed in less than a week).
- Masks should be prioritised for those where close contact is unavoidable. Otherwise, follow social distancing and handwashing/sanitising rules. Masks should be worn in line with the manufacturer's recommendations, which for paper masks is no more than 15 minutes of effective use.

- COVID-19 is sensitive to cooking temperatures (63°C for 4 minutes), but make sure all high-risk foods (containing protein such as raw meat or rice) are thoroughly cooked until piping hot anyway.
- Do not cough or sneeze when preparing, cooking or serving food.
- Wash raw produce (fruit and vegetables) before you prepare or cook them.
- Do not touch your face.
- Keep in mind that gloves can be contaminated and contaminating as well: it's better to wash your hands frequently.
- Avoid using shared spaces, such as kitchens or toilet facilities/bathrooms, at the same time as each other.
- Open windows in shared spaces if you can.
- Provide hand sanitiser and tissues for staff/volunteers, and encourage them to use them.
- Make sure there are places to wash hands for 20 seconds with soap and water, and encourage everyone to do so regularly.

### **Food packaging**

It is very unlikely that you can catch Coronavirus from food.

COVID-19 is a respiratory illness. It is not known to be transmitted by exposure to food or food packaging.

The World Health Organization advises that the likelihood of an infected person contaminating commercial goods is low. The risk of catching the virus that causes COVID-19 from a package that has been moved, travelled, and exposed to different conditions and temperature is also very low.

While food packaging is not known to present a specific risk, efforts should be made to ensure it is cleaned and handled in line with usual food safety practices.

### **Delivering or collection of food donations**

There are two options of food delivery. Food is delivered to people's doorstep or beneficiary collects item at designated hub (eg food bank).

#### **Delivery to homes**

- Clean and disinfect any reusable containers used to deliver food.
- Avoid going into people's homes if possible. Leave food/goods outside on the doorstep. Let the person in isolation know that you are delivering soon via message or phone call. Keep 2m distance when if they open the door. Recommend that recipients wash their hands after taking the delivery into their home.
- Drivers to wash hands before and after deliveries. When out and about, keep a bottle of alcohol hand sanitiser to hand (hand sanitiser needs to have an alcohol content of at least 60% according to Public Health England). Homemade hand sanitiser may not be effective at killing the virus, and can damage skin.

- Only one person in delivery van (following hand washing/sanitising rules) – the driver needs to place the items at the door, knock and step back to keep the safe distance. A handy tip to tell people expecting home deliveries - keep some shopping bags, cardboard boxes or even a laundry basket close by when the delivery is due so they can easily bring goods into the house.

#### Collecting from food bank/venue

- There are increased risks with people coming into the venue and not remaining 2m apart when waiting. It is therefore recommended to mark the 2m distance on the floor (eg with coloured tape) in front of the table/counter.
- Minimise number of people working in the venue at a time; ideally keep to one or two. If two, then they would need to keep the 2m rule (by for example working on different tables which would be disinfected before and after use).
- Maintain 2m between people waiting in the queue and also between them and the volunteers distributing food.
- Let people enter the venue only in small groups, to ensure that spaces are not crowded.
- Queue control is required outside of the venue if it becomes very busy.
- Public transport should be avoided where possible. If public transport is unavoidable, try not to touch surfaces with your hands. Wash your hands or use hand sanitiser after travelling if possible, or wear gloves which you can change. If wearing gloves while travelling, remove these immediately after leaving the train/bus, without touching the outside of the glove with your bare skin.

#### How to disinfect surfaces and equipment

Disinfect equipment and hand-contact surfaces (eg sink taps and door handles) frequently with an anti-bacterial spray/sanitiser which is effective against viruses. Alternatively, you can use a bleach solution.

#### Disinfection with bleach

This should be carried out in a well-ventilated space, with windows open.

Take care to avoid contact between bleach and bare skin. While mixing the solution, it is advisable to wear kitchen gloves to protect your skin from bleach splashes. (However, these gloves should then be changed before beginning to clean the items.)

**Wash your hands** with soap and hot water before beginning. If wearing kitchen gloves which you have previously used, also wash your hands with soap while wearing the gloves.

Mix 1 part home bleach with 10 parts cold water (see end note), and put it in a spray bottle, squirt bottle, or open topped container. Wipe down the outside of the bleach solution bottle with bleach solution and leave it for 10 minutes. Ten minutes later the item should only just be dry, or ideally slightly wet to the touch - if it's not, you must add more bleach to your solution, or use more solution, then try again.

Make new bleach solution every 24 hours, as it will degrade rapidly.

If your hair is likely to fall onto your face, tie it back before you begin to disinfect the items.

Remove any protective gloves you are wearing, wash your hands, and put on (fresh) disposable gloves if available. If you do not have any gloves, you must wash your hands very thoroughly with soap and hot water.

If putting on gloves, ensure that you touch only the cuff area with your bare hand, to prevent transmission of virus onto the exterior of the glove. If this is not possible, disinfect the exterior of your gloves before touching the items which you plan to exchange.

Using a new cloth, or one which has been washed at a minimum of 60°C, wipe down a space to put disinfected items once you've wiped them down. Leave it for ten minutes.

Wipe down the surface of each item you need to disinfect and regularly put more bleach solution on the cloth. Place each item on the disinfected surface.

Do not talk as you work, or hold items near your mouth.

Do not apply the bleach solution to loose fruit or vegetables. Buy pre-packaged produce whenever possible. If there is no alternative, disinfect your sink and tap handles.

Clean each item or surface of visible dirt, as you normally would. Place items on a surface with no visible soil on it. **Wash your hands**.

Using a new cloth, or one which has been washed at a minimum of 60°C, thoroughly scrub down a clean surface, to leave things you've cleaned on it. **Wash your hands again**.

Using a new cloth, or one which has been washed at a minimum of 60°C, thoroughly scrub each item on all surfaces, and rinse in clean running water.

Place it on the surface you scrubbed earlier.

Do not talk as you work, or hold items near your mouth.

**With freshly washed hands**, place items in a clean plastic bag until needed.

### **Removing some of the virus with soap and water**

This is a much less reliable option as compared to bleach solution. Try to get bleach.

Clean each item or surface of visible dirt, as you normally would. Place items on a surface with no visible soil on it.

Clean your tap handles with soap/washing up liquid. **Wash your hands**.

Using a new cloth, or one which has been washed at a minimum of 60°C, thoroughly scrub down a clean surface, to leave things you've cleaned on it. **Wash your hands again**.

Using a new cloth, or one which has been washed at a minimum of 60°C, thoroughly scrub each item on all surfaces, and rinse in clean running water.

Place it on the surface you scrubbed earlier.

Do not talk as you work, or hold items near your mouth.

**With freshly washed hands**, place items in a clean plastic bag until needed.

## **Delivering leaflets**

You can deliver leaflets to homes, but volunteers delivering them must take precautions, (maintain 2m distance from other people, wash/disinfect hands at start and finish).

Public Health England has advised that there is no perceived increase in risk of contracting the new Coronavirus (Covid-19) for handling post or freight from specified areas. From experience with other Coronaviruses, research shows that these types of viruses don't survive long on objects such as letters or parcels.

## **CORONAVIRUS - WASH YOUR HANDS MORE OFTEN FOR 20 SECONDS**

**Use soap and water or a hand sanitiser when you:**

- Get home or into work
- Blow your nose, sneeze or cough
- Eat or handle food



**Protect yourself & others**

For more information go to [nhs.uk/coronavirus](https://www.nhs.uk/coronavirus)

Food, Health & Safety Team, Environmental Health & Licensing  
Brighton & Hove City Council 01273 294416  
[www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/foodsafety](http://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/foodsafety)

Sources:- Cambridge Sustainable Food -

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1m5FjElxYHjzbfaaxdOuZOdh3vZyLEptXGon5lo8614/edit>

<https://www.food.gov.uk/>

<https://www.food.gov.uk/business-guidance>

<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-body/best-way-to-wash-your-hands/>

<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-body/how-to-prevent-germs-from-spreading/>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov-guidance-to-assist-professionals-in-advising-the-general-public/guidance-to-assist-professionals-in-advising-the-general-public>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-food-businesses/guidance-for-food-businesses-on-coronavirus-covid-19>

Please be aware that online guidance is being constantly updated so these links may change