

Covid-19 transmission and dairy foods

Evidence of safety on farm and in factory

Food
Standards
Australia
New
Zealand

[Online source](#)

Novel Coronavirus and Food Safety

Australia is closely monitoring an outbreak of respiratory illness caused by coronavirus (COVID-19) first identified in Wuhan, Hubei Province, China.

The Australian Government Department of Health has established a website with up-to-date information on the virus. [Visit the website.](#)

What is Coronavirus?

Coronaviruses are a family of viruses that usually cause respiratory illness. They include viruses that cause the common cold and more serious illnesses such as Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS-CoV) and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS-CoV).

Can the virus be transmitted through food?

Transmission through food is unlikely and there is no evidence of this occurring with COVID-19 to date, however investigations into how the virus spreads are continuing.

The European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) has released a statement noting there is currently no evidence that food is a likely source or route of transmission of the virus. [Read the statement.](#)

Previous experience with outbreaks of illness due to MERS-CoV, SARS-CoV and other respiratory viruses (e.g. avian influenza) suggest that novel coronavirus may have been transmitted from animals to humans.

General food safety advice

Everyone should practice good hygiene when preparing and handling food.

The World Health Organization (WHO) has issued [precautionary recommendations](#) including advice on good hygiene practices during food handling and preparation, they include:

- washing hands between handling raw and cooked foods
- thorough cooking and proper handling of meat products
- covering your mouth and nose when coughing and sneezing
- avoiding close contact with anyone showing symptoms of respiratory illness, such as coughing and sneezing

Good hygiene and sanitation are important to avoid cross contamination between raw or undercooked foods and cooked or ready to eat foods in the kitchen.

As an added precaution, if you have suspected symptoms of respiratory illness you should avoid preparing food for other people and seek medical attention.

Advice for food businesses

Food businesses should continue to practice good hygiene as required in the food safety standards, including:

- cleaning and sanitising, particularly all food contact surfaces
- thorough and frequent handwashing
- taking all practicable measures to prevent food contamination by food handlers.

More advice on managing the risk of COVID-19 is available from the [Victorian Department of Health](#).

FSANZ will continue to monitor developments and liaise with the Department of Health, the Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment, state and territory health authorities and international counterparts

Dairy Food
Safety
Victoria

Online source

COVID-19 and dairy food safety

DFSV is continuing to maintain business as usual at this time. If there are any concerns with access to licensed facilities by DFSV staff, please contact DFSV directly.

- All licensed dairy manufacturers and producers in Victoria are required to have a food safety program that documents procedures to manage hazards associated with dairy food production. The existing procedures in these food safety programs (such as cleaning and sanitation and personal hygiene procedures, including worker health requirements) are designed to control the risk of contamination of food with pathogens (including viruses) that may compromise food safety. COVID-19 has not been reported to be any more resistant than other viruses or bacterial agents of concern to food safety and as such should be adequately managed by these policies and procedures.
- Food safety programs also address and manage the hazards associated with ill workers in a food manufacturing environment. These procedures include exclusion of personnel suffering from illness and may include heightened cleaning and sanitation efforts to minimise risk of transmission (irrespective of the type of illness).
- Reinforcing these procedures and ensuring that they are strictly enforced at this time is imperative.
- The primary consideration for employers is to take actions to protect other employees that may have come in contact with the ill employee. Where a worker experiences symptoms, they should seek advice from [Victorian Department of Health and Human Services](#). Separate advice for employers is provided by the [Australian Government Department of Health](#). The government guidelines for restrictions on those who have been in close contact (as defined by [DHHS](#)) with someone diagnosed with COVID-19 would apply where appropriate.
- There has been NO evidence of the transmission of COVID-19 through food or food packaging. Further information on COVID-19 and food safety is available from [FSANZ](#), [EFSA](#) and [FDA](#).
- The US EPA maintains a [list of disinfectants](#) effective for use against COVID-19. However it is important to ensure that these are suitable and approved for use in food manufacturing in Australia.
- Dairy Australia have also provided useful information on COVID-19 on their [website](#).

Dairysafe
SA

Online source

Dairy food safety & the Covid-19 Incident

It's important to acknowledge current information from the [World Health Organisation](#) that food is not known to be a mode of transmission for COVID-19. The food safety regulatory framework continues to apply during the Covid-19 incident.

Everyone in the dairy supply chain must continue to practice good hygiene - one of the best ways to prevent infection spread includes regular and thorough hand washing.

	<p>Businesses will continue to manage their food safety programs and responsibilities.</p> <p>Dairysafe will continue to verify standards are being maintained throughout the dairy supply chain and manage any food safety incidents.</p>
<p>NSW Food Authority</p> <p><u>Online source</u></p>	<p>COVID-19 (Coronavirus) advice</p> <p>Australia is closely monitoring an outbreak of respiratory illness caused by coronavirus (COVID-19) first identified in Wuhan, Hubei Province, China.</p> <p>There is no evidence to date to suggest that food is a source or route of transmission of the virus.</p> <p>There is no reason to avoid certain foods or specific cuisine as a result of COVID-19.</p>
<p>New Zealand Food Safety</p> <p><u>Online source</u></p>	<p>Can the virus be transmitted through food?</p> <p>Experience with recent acute respiratory diseases such as Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) and Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) suggests that people are unlikely to be infected with the virus through food. There isn't evidence to date of this happening with the 2019 Coronavirus (COVID-19).</p> <p>Coronaviruses cannot grow in food – they need a host (animal or human) to grow in. Cooking for at least 30 minutes at 60°C kills SARS, which is a similar coronavirus.</p> <p>Coronaviruses are most commonly passed between animals and people and from person-to-person contact.</p> <p>The source of the COVID-19 virus is believed to be animals, but the exact source is not yet known.</p> <p>The virus is commonly transmitted through direct mucous membrane contact by infectious droplets, e.g. breathing in airborne virus from the sneeze of someone who is infected, or through hand to mouth/nose contact after fingers have touched a contaminated surface.</p> <p>Investigations in China are continuing to identify the source of the outbreak and ways it can be transmitted to people.</p>
<p>European Food Safety Authority advice</p> <p><u>Online source</u></p>	<p>The EFSA chief scientist, Marta Hugas, is quoted as saying: “Experiences from previous outbreaks of related coronaviruses, such as severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus (SARS-CoV) and Middle East respiratory syndrome coronavirus (MERS-CoV), show that transmission through food consumption did not occur.</p> <p>At the moment, there is no evidence to suggest that coronavirus is any different in this respect.”</p>