

# Child Care Food Handling Procedures During COVID-19

According to the CDC and FDA 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 from food products or packaging.

It may be possible that a person can get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object, like a packaging container, that has 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.

## Food Handling and Preparation

**Wash Your Hands!** Before and after handling, preparing, serving or eating food. It is important to always wash your hands with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds.

Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth. If you touch your face, wash hands. If you are wearing gloves and contaminate them, remove gloves, wash your hands and put on a new pair of gloves.

Clean and sanitize kitchen and food contact surfaces often. Wear gloves. Wash hands before and after.



If a stronger disinfecting product needs to be used due to contamination (such as following coughing or sneezing), make sure the surface is rinsed with water after the required contact time with the disinfectant.

Follow food safety guidelines: separate raw meat from other foods (store on the bottom shelf in a pan or on a plate), cook foods to the right temperature (use a thermometer to check), and refrigerate foods promptly (cold foods should be at 41° Fahrenheit, or less, within 4 hours of cooking or preparing). Note that refrigerators that store breast milk should be kept at 39° Fahrenheit, or less. See the [Washington State Food Worker Manual](#) for more information.

## Physical Distancing during Mealtimes

Serve meals in children's individual rooms or program space, if possible, rather than in a common area.

Stagger, or alternate, lunchtime to help limit the number of children in each classroom.

Make sure children and staff wash their hands before and after eating.

Spread out seating so that children are as far apart as possible at table.

If currently practicing family-style meals, stop doing so. For school-age programs, buffet-style service should also be halted. Children should not be allowed to serve their own food or snacks during outbreak.



Child care providers should sit with children at the table. Providers should closely supervise children to ensure they are not sharing food or touching each other during mealtime.

No bare hand contact with food. Use tongs, utensils or wax paper to serve foods onto children's plates. Do not touch prepared food with your bare hands.

Consider meal delivery service or have children bring sack lunches from home.

## **Toothbrushing**

Discontinue toothbrushing at this time due the activities increased risk of saliva exposure.

Oral health promotion activities can continue. See [CavityFreeKids.org](http://CavityFreeKids.org) for creative oral health educational activities.

## **Feeding infants and young children**

Follow all current child care regulations surrounding infant and toddler feeding ([WAC 110-300-0280,-0281, -0285](#)). This includes washing hands thoroughly before preparing bottles and feeding infants.

When holding infants for feeding, child care providers should wear long hair in a ponytail and put a protective covering over their clothing, such as a large button-down, long-sleeved shirt that can be removed and washed, if it becomes contaminated with secretions from the child (such as saliva, nasal discharge, spit-up). An item, such as a receiving blanket dedicated to one child, can be used as a cover during feeding or handling of infant. If it is not contaminated with body fluids, it can be reused to decrease amount of laundry. Place any contaminated clothing in a plastic bag until it can be washed. Providers caring for young children should have extra changes of clothing available.



Providers should wash hands thoroughly after feeding babies and young children. They should also wash any areas of bare skin on their body that the feeding child may have touched, such as their face, neck, or arms.

Bottles should be sent home for cleaning and sanitizing at the end of each day.

