

The Evolution of COVID-19 and Food Safety



Public Health

Prevent. Promote. Protect.

Fargo Cass Public Health

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Hello!

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Topics of Discussion

1. COVID-19 Transmission
2. History of COVID-19 in North Dakota
3. Recommended Practices for Buffet Tables and Brown Bag Lunches
4. Employee Health and Hygiene
5. Questions and Comments

COVID-19 Transmission

Like many other respiratory viruses, coronaviruses spread quickly through droplets that you project out of your mouth or nose when you breathe, cough, sneeze, or speak.

Fomite transmission of COVID-19 is not considered a main transmission route of the disease, however, this was not known during much of the pandemic. As the pandemic evolved our knowledge and understanding of the virus also evolved.

Formulation of Guidance

As the pandemic evolved, guidance changes were a frequent occurrence. It was often difficult to keep up with the ever-changing guidance. Our local, state and federal partners relayed updated guidance as quickly as they could .

CDC initially provided broad updates to facilities (including schools and businesses) on safe operation. These updates and guidances were adapted by individual states/cities/organizations to follow.

ND Healthy Return to Learn Team (Schools)

ND Smart Restart Guidance (Businesses)

Most of the guidance provided was just guidance. It would have been nearly impossible to police every business and organization. In addition, the cost required to follow the guidance may have been out of reach for many.

Swiss cheese model (Layers of mitigation working together)

History of COVID-19 in Schools in North Dakota

March 2020 – First case identified in North Dakota, state of Emergency later declared, schools subsequently closed for the remainder of the school year. Many schools continued to provide “brown bag” lunches for their students

Fall 2020 – Schools reopen with plans in place to mitigate spread. Plans include a mixture of masks mandates, hybrid learning, virtual learning, increased sanitation, social distancing, suspension of hot/cold food buffets etc. USDA authorized free lunches for all students regardless of income levels. Many school still continue to provide “brown bag” lunches for their students.

Fall 2021 – Schools continue to be open, mitigation plans still in place, however, not to the same extent as fall 2020. Schools universally reopened hot/cold food bars. USDA free lunch program continues to serve students. Many school still continue to provide “brown bag” lunches for their students.

Spring 2022 - North Dakota officially transitions into an endemic phase. Things we learned during the pandemic continue to mold how we view food safety.

Brown Bag Food Safety

FOOD INSECURITY NEEDS IN COMMUNITY

Many schools in North Dakota recognized the need to continue to provide lunches when the school closures occurred

- Challenge was to remain socially distanced and continue to provide safe food for the communities
- Schools worked with health departments to continue to safely provide meals



Buffet Tables



- Sneeze guards are required
- Best practices may include;
 - providing sanitizer prior to buffet line for hand hygiene
 - Some facilities offer single use gloves
 - preportioning into grab and go food containers or single use items (condiments)
 - Replacement of utensils between lunch runs

Employee Health: There Are Some Things You Don't Need to Share



If You're Sick, Let Your Supervisor Know

Report the following **symptoms**:

- Diarrhea
- Vomiting
- Jaundice
- Sore throat with fever
- Lesions containing pus on the hand, wrist, or an exposed body part not properly covered (such as boils and infected cuts, wounds, or lesions, however small)

Consider administering an at-home COVID-19 test if you have respiratory symptoms or recent exposure.



COVID-19 Recommendations

If you have a known exposure, you should test approximately 5 days after last exposure regardless of vaccination status

If you test positive, you should stay home for a minimum of 5 days from test day (no symptoms) or symptom onset date. Upon return wearing a well-fitting mask is recommended for an additional 5 days

Household and close contacts should be aware that COVID may develop anytime during their quarantine period. If symptoms were to develop, they should begin to isolate and seek testing immediately.

Items Required for Effective Handwashing



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Hand Washing

Wash hands when:

- entering the kitchen**
- changing tasks**
- before putting on gloves**



How to properly wash your hands

- scrub 10-15 seconds
- rinse with warm water
- dry with a disposable towel
- total time = 20 – 30 seconds

Best Practices from the Field:

Singing of Happy Birthday

30 Minute Timer



Proper Glove Use

Step 1: Wash Hands

Step 2: Put on Gloves

When Do I Change Gloves?

When changing tasks

When handling different food

To cover a bandaged cut

When gloves become dirty/soiled

Picking something up off of the floor

Cleaning and Sanitizing Dining Room Tables

- ❖ Wiping towels that have been stored in sanitizer solution should be utilized to wipe table surfaces as needed.
- ❖ Prior to first meal service, apply sanitizer using a spray bottle to surfaces that are clean and dry. Allow that sanitizer solution to air dry.
- ❖ Detergent may be used to clean large spills and remove sticky build up.
 - ❖ Ensure wiping towels are stored in the sanitizer buckets and **not** in dishwater buckets.
 - ❖ Detergent does not replace sanitizing.



QUESTIONS / COMMENTS?