

# Safe Grocery Shopping During the Coronavirus Outbreak

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The coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic has disrupted everyday life in many ways. Many states have ordered residents to stay at home and avoid any unnecessary contact with others. That being said, you still have to eat. It is important that you take precautions in all parts of your life, even when you're just taking a trip to the grocery store.

## GROCERY SHOPPING PRECAUTIONS

When you have to go to the grocery store, remember the following tips in order to keep yourself as safe as possible:

- **Limit your visits**—The more often you go to the store, the more likely you are to come into contact with someone, or something, that may be carrying COVID-19. Make a list of what you need before going shopping so that you do not need to return unnecessarily.
- **Time your trips**—Be smart about choosing when to take your trip to the store. If possible, go during times that are less busy. The fewer people who are in the store, the less likely you are to come into contact with the disease. If you are a senior citizen, check if nearby stores are offering specific shopping hours for you.
- **Prepare properly**—Wash your hands before you go shopping in order to reduce the risk of spreading germs to others. Some stores are offering free hand sanitizer or disinfectant wipes for guests to use. When you arrive, be sure to sanitize the handle of your grocery cart or basket.
- **Distance yourself**—While at the store, stay at least 6 feet away from others. If you need to get to the other side of a crowded aisle, take the long way around in order to avoid squeezing through a herd of shoppers.
- **Watch what you touch**—Avoid picking up any product unless you are certain that you intend to purchase it. It is possible that you may come into contact with a product that another shopper previously examined. Avoid touching your face while shopping.
- **Don't use cash**—You can lessen your risk of picking up germs by using a debit or credit card to pay for your groceries. Avoiding the exchange of cash and coins reduces your chance of spreading germs to others, or vice versa.
- **Disinfect**—The battle does not end once you leave the store. When you arrive back home, it is possible that you have just brought germs back with you. Research has shown that COVID-19 can live for up to 24 hours on cardboard and as long as three days on plastic and stainless steel. As such, you should wash your hands and disinfect all nonporous containers and any surfaces that your grocery bags may have touched. If you use reusable bags to shop, you should also wash them between each use.

COVID-19 can spread easily and, although many nonessential businesses have been ordered to close, necessary operations like grocery stores still bear a great deal of risk for anyone who visits them. It is up to you to take on the responsibility of protecting yourself and others by committing to safe habits while shopping.

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