

Everything About Food

by Indian Scientists Response to Covid

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Indian
Scientists'
Response to
COVID-19

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You might be worried about getting Covid19 from food. You might not know what to do with the packaging your groceries come in. You might even wonder if it is okay to eat whatever you want. If so, we have some answers for you.



The good news is that the food authorities of the USA and European Union have stated that there is no evidence so far CoViD-19 is transmitted through food or food packaging. Nevertheless, let us see how we can be safe while handling food in our houses. The first thing to know is that the coronavirus cannot survive above roughly 65 degrees C, and so cooking will destroy any viruses in the food. Therefore, you cannot get CoViD-19 through eating food cooked from something that had the virus in it. We do not know yet how long the virus survives on fresh produce so it might be better to avoid uncooked food. The risk is in getting the virus on your hands and touching your face while unpacking groceries, cooking, or serving food. Let us look at each of these steps now.

When you bring the groceries into your house

You might be worried that the person bringing the groceries home, or the packaging of the food, will carry the virus. We know that the virus can survive on cardboard for 1 day and stainless steel or plastic for 3 days. It cannot grow or multiply on food or any other other surfaces. A good idea is to identify a place near the front door where the groceries can be unpacked.



For rice, dal, atta, bread or even biscuits that come in a packet, the safest thing to do is to open the contents directly into the jar where you want to store them. Ask someone else in the house, whose hands have been washed, to open this jar for you, and you can transfer the contents without touching this jar. Once emptied, you can throw the packaging into the garbage box kept outside. After this, remember to wash your own hands with soap. Water-proof items like plastic milk sachets can be directly washed with a little bit of soap and water.



Remember, these precautions are to prevent someone from touching a possibly contaminated package or food and then touching their face. Eating the food itself is safe.

What kind of food is safe?

As far as the coronavirus is concerned, all food is equally safe to eat. We should continue to wash all fruits and vegetables when we get them into the house, as always. Eating non-vegetarian food, as long as it is cooked well as usual, is perfectly safe to eat as well. Do be sure that you continue to eat as healthy as possible.



If your neighbours offer you food, or you have ordered food from outside, the food itself is safe to eat as long as it is cooked hygienically. Use the same precautions while handling the containers, as you would for the packages from the grocery store.

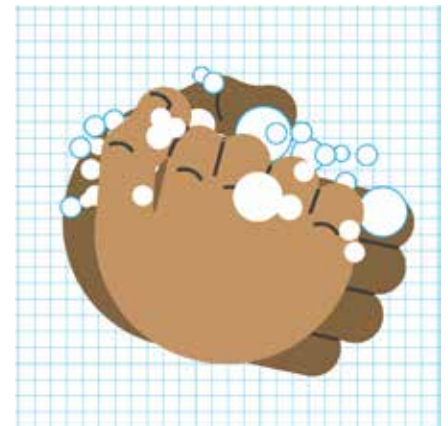


When you want a snack

You might want a biscuit from a jar or some home made snacks from a box if you are hungry. As long as you have washed their hands after coming into the house, go ahead and have a biscuit! If someone else in the house is sick, it is best that you put the snacks on a plate to give them, and then wash the plate later, along with your hands. Remember not to put your hand back in the jar after putting it in your mouth!

While preparing to cook

First wash your hands well with soap. If all the food is going to be cooked well, then any virus will be destroyed. However, it is best to wash the cutting surface, knives and vessels with soap before you start, and rinse all vegetables well. Now you are ready to start.



While cooking food

First, if you have symptoms of flu (cold, cough, fever, etc), let someone else in your family cook instead, and you can supervise them. If you think that someone has touched the stove, vessels or big spoons immediately after coming from outside, then you could clean them with soapy water first. Wash your hands well, and cook as you normally do. Just remember not to touch your face or any other surface during this time. Behave as you would if your hands have just handled some green chillies!

Is water safe to drink?

Currently, there is no evidence for the survival of the CoViD-19 causing virus in drinking water. However, it is best to keep drinking water covered, and not dip our fingers in it while filling our cup from it.

While we are eating

We should all wash our hands well before eating. It is preferable that one person serves the food onto everyone's plate. It is also good not to sit very close to each other while eating. If someone is sick, let them eat separately, and wash their plates well with soap afterwards.



Summary

- **You cannot get Covid19 by eating cooked food**
- **Cooking will destroy the coronavirus**
- **Coronavirus has nothing to do non-vegetarian food, which is safe to eat**
- **The risk lies in touching the food packages from the grocery shop, and then touching our faces**
- **When you bring groceries, empty them into your jars and boxes at the entrance without touching these boxes, and throw the packaging in the waste bin outside**
- **If someone in the house has flu-like symptoms, bring them their food in their room, and wash their plate with detergent after**
- **Wash your hands before cooking, and do not touch your face while cooking or serving**



Every attempt has been made for scientific accuracy; in case any inaccuracies are found, please bring it to our notice at indscicov@gmail.com.

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