



# Wayne County Health Department

**Nicholas V. Cascarelli, Ed.D.**  
*Health Commissioner*

**Eric A Smith, MD**  
*Medical Director*

## Food Safety Guidance During Covid-19

FDA's Food Code recommendations for hand washing and glove use in food service and retail food stores have not changed as a result of the pandemic. ([Food Code 2017](#) Section 2-301.11). Per the FDA Food Code: with limited exceptions, employees may not contact exposed, ready-to-eat foods with their bare hands and shall use suitable utensils such as deli tissue, spatulas, tongs, single use-gloves, or dispensing equipment ([Food Code 2017](#) Section 3-301.11). Gloves are not a substitute for hand washing or hand hygiene. If your task requires direct contact with ready-to-eat food, wash your hands and the exposed portions of your arms for 20 seconds prior to donning gloves and before touching food or food-contact surfaces. Wash your hands immediately after removing gloves.

On April 3, the CDC released an updated [recommendation](#) regarding the use of cloth face coverings to help slow the spread of COVID-19. CDC recommends the use of simple cloth face coverings as a voluntary public health measure in public settings where other social distancing measures are difficult to maintain (e.g., grocery stores and pharmacies).

For workers on farms, and in food production, processing, and retail settings who do not typically wear masks as part of their jobs, consider the following if you choose to use a cloth face covering to slow the spread of COVID-19:

- Maintain face coverings in accordance with parameters in [FDA's Model Food Code](#) sections 4-801.11 Clean Linens and 4.802.11 Specifications.
- Launder reusable face coverings before each daily use.
- CDC also has [additional information on the use of face coverings](#), including washing instructions and information on how to make homemade face covers.

NOTE: The cloth face coverings recommended by CDC are not surgical masks or N-95 respirators. Those are critical supplies that must continue to be reserved for healthcare workers and other medical first responders, as recommended by current CDC guidance.

To prevent spread of COVID-19, CDC is recommending individuals employ social distancing or maintaining approximately 6 feet from others, when possible. In food production/processing facilities and retail food establishments, an evaluation should be made to identify and implement operational changes that increase employee separation. However, social distancing to the full 6 feet will not be possible in some food facilities.

The risk of an employee transmitting COVID-19 to another is dependent on distance between employees, the duration of the exposure, and the effectiveness of employee hygiene practices and sanitation. When it's impractical for employees in these settings to maintain social distancing, effective hygiene practices should be maintained to reduce the chance of spreading the virus. Also, see [Should Employees in retail food and food production settings wear face coverings to prevent exposure to COVID-19?](#) (Posted April 4, 2020).

IMPORTANT: Maintaining social distancing in the absence of effective hygiene practices may not prevent the spread of this virus. Food facilities should be vigilant in their hygiene practices, including frequent and proper hand-washing and routine cleaning of all surfaces. Because the intensity of the COVID-19 outbreak may differ according to geographic location, coordination with state and local officials is strongly encouraged for all businesses so that timely and accurate information can guide appropriate responses in each location where their operations reside. Sick employees should follow the CDC's [What to do if you are sick with coronavirus disease 2019 \(COVID-19\)](#).

**Main Office:** 203 S. Walnut Street · Wooster, OH 44691 · Ph: 330-264-9590 ·  
WIC Ph: 330-264-1942 · Fax 330-262-2538

**Environmental Division:** 428 W. Liberty Street · Wooster, OH 44691 Ph: 330-264-2426 ·  
Fax: 330-262-8433

**WEBSITE** · [Wayne-health.org](http://Wayne-health.org)

“Wayne County Health Department is an equal opportunity employer and provider.”