



# COVID-19 Guidelines for Grocery Shopping

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As an essential service, grocery stores and other food retailers have remained open to meet the public's need for food. Grocery stores have implemented a wide variety of strategies to reduce the risk of transmission of COVID. The general public can support these efforts and ensure essential food products are available for all community members by being mindful while shopping.

**Grocery stores are public spaces. If you have been asked to self-isolate or if you are feeling unwell, please stay home and avoid all public spaces.** If you have been asked to [self-isolate](#), this means that you will need a friend, family member, neighbour, or delivery service to get your groceries for you until your isolation period is done. There are several grocery stores and meal programs that will deliver foods to your home. Call 211 or visit 211.ca to learn more about the services near you.

## **Before Shopping:**

### *Plan Ahead*

Menu planning is an important tool to save money, support nutritious food choices, and reduce the time you spend browsing in the grocery store. Consider the following:

- Make a list, consider some alternative food choices for if your first choice is out of stock
- How much food does your household actually need?
- What type of food storage do you have?
- Is there space to store the food you purchase safely (eg. Is the freezer fully stocked)?
- Can you cook once and use again? Many foods are great for planned leftovers.
- Does a neighbour, friend, or family member need help with grocery shopping?
- Consider purchasing nourishing and less-perishable foods.

### *Cleaning and Disinfection*

- Remember to wash your hands before and after grocery shopping and bring hand sanitizer with 70% alcohol if you have it.
- If you choose to bring reusable bags, wash all bags between each use.

### **At the Grocery Store**

#### *Avoid Overstocking*

Canada's food system is robust and there is no indication of food shortages. There is no need to panic and rush to purchase and stockpile supplies, doing so may lead to temporary stock challenges for grocers and a lack of food needed by others.

#### *Physical Distancing*

- Reducing the amount of time we are in public spaces and in crowds is key to physical distancing.
  - Stick to your list to reduce your time browsing.
  - Try to buy at least a week's worth of food and supplies instead of making multiple trips to prevent having to go out in public more often.
- Many stores are offering pick up or delivery services. Be mindful that these may require planning ahead as demand for these services have increased.
- Go shopping during non-peak times. If your schedule allows for it, shopping during off-peak times gives greater distance between you and other shoppers.
- Try to maintain a distance of 2 meters from other shoppers and staff.
- If you are an older adult or you are immunocompromised, find out if your store offers dedicated times for your shopping. Some stores are limiting access to their stores when they first open each day to reduce the risk for you.

### *Cleaning and Disinfection*

- Remember to wash your hands before and after grocery shopping and bring hand sanitizer with 70-90% alcohol if you have it.
- Consider disinfecting high touch areas like the grocery cart or basket. Many businesses including grocery stores have increased the frequency of their

disinfecting procedures. If you have a disinfectant wipe with you, it is good hygiene practice to clean the handle of the shopping cart. If you don't have a disinfectant wipe, you can also use an alcohol based hand sanitizer.

- If you use reusable bags, clean the bags before and after each use.
- When in public spaces, avoid touching your face, and sneeze and cough into your elbow. As soon as you can, wash your hands. [Here is a resource](#) to help keep you and your family healthy.

### **Bringing Your Groceries Home**

Proper hand hygiene is the most important step you can take in preventing transmission of the virus from product packaging to the people in your household. While you can use a variety of techniques to clean or disinfect food packaging, the most effective solution is to wash your hands after storing your food and before you cook/prepare or eat any food.

### **Nutritious Eating Pattern Supports Immune Health**

You can meet your body's needs by following a nutritious eating pattern that meets [Canada's Food Guide recommendations](#). No food, supplement, or natural health product can 'boost' your immune system.

- Remember to wash your hands before preparing and/or eating food

### **Additional Resources**

For information on the 2019 novel coronavirus including information on wearing a mask for the general public see the [Grey Bruce Health Unit Website](#)

For more information on the 2019 novel coronavirus including when to use masks see the [Ontario Ministry of Health website](#).

This resource has been adapted from Chatham Kent Public Health, Tips for Grocery Shopping during COVID-19 Pandemic: <https://ckphu.com/2020/03/tips-for-grocery-shopping-during-covid-19-pandemic/>