



**THE ROMAN CATHOLIC  
ARCHDIOCESE OF PORT OF SPAIN**  
**Health, Safety and Environment Team**  
c/o Archbishop's House, 27 Maraval Road, Port of Spain

**Bulletin # 4**

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# **Guidelines for Best Practices when preparing and delivering food and aid to migrants and refugees**

## *Introduction:*

In response to a request from the Archdiocesan Ministry for Migrants and Refugees, the Health, Safety and Environmental Team of the Archdiocese has prepared these guidelines to assist Parish Ministries for Migrants and Refugees in their preparation and delivery of food and other aid to migrant populations. The information contained within has been modified for the local context from guidelines provided by local and international governmental agencies.

The document has been designed to make it easy to read, yet provide important information to keep you protected while doing the selfless and caring work that you do for vulnerable migrants and refugees.

**Thank you for all that you do.**

# New coronavirus and COVID-19

**CORONAVIRUS SYMPTOMS**

	COVID-19	Allergies	Influenza	Common Cold
FEVER	COMMON		COMMON	SOMETIMES
COUGH	COMMON		COMMON	COMMON
SHORTNESS OF BREATH	COMMON			
MUSCLE ACHES	COMMON		COMMON	SOMETIMES
SORE THROAT	SOMETIMES		SOMETIMES	COMMON
DIARRHEA	SOMETIMES		SOMETIMES	
CONGESTION	SOMETIMES	COMMON	SOMETIMES	COMMON
LOSS OF SMELL	SOMETIMES	SOMETIMES	SOMETIMES	SOMETIMES
RUNNY NOSE	SOMETIMES	COMMON	SOMETIMES	SOMETIMES
SNEEZING		COMMON		
ITCHY EYES		COMMON		

Source: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html>

Symptoms may vary from person to person and may range from mild to severe. Symptoms usually occur from 2-14 days after exposure. If you have a cough with fever or shortness of breath, call your physician's office BEFORE visiting.

The new coronavirus is called SARS-CoV-2 (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome-Coronavirus-2) and it causes the illness known as COVID-19. It is spread mainly by droplets and aerosols, and the main symptoms include,

- Fever
- Cough
- Shortness of breath

While the vast majority of COVID-19 patients have mild to moderate infection or do not even know they have the infection (asymptomatic), there are risk factors for developing more severe disease, which include,

- Older age (especially those > 65 years of age),
- Chronic medical disorders, such as diabetes, hypertension, heart disease, chronic lung diseases, chronic kidney diseases, cancer, autoimmune diseases such as rheumatoid arthritis and lupus
- Patients who have had kidney or other transplantation
- Individuals taking medication that suppress their immune systems, such as steroids, anti-cancer drugs, transplantation medicines, etc.

## Spread of Coronavirus

COVID-19 is a respiratory illness. At present, there is no evidence that COVID-19 is spread by exposure to food or food packaging. However, because it is known that the virus can survive on surfaces for hours or even days, it is recommended to you take basic precautions, such as frequent handwashing or use of hand sanitizers, after touching food items or packaging that might have been previously touched by others.

Although it is very unlikely that coronavirus is transmitted through food, as a matter of good hygiene everyone handling food should wash their hands often with soap and water for at least

**20 seconds.** This should be done as a matter of routine, before and after handling food, and especially after being in a public place, blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.

## **Basic Protection against COVID-19**

**Prevention is the most important action you can take to protect yourself and your family** from getting COVID-19. The Ministry of Health of Trinidad and Tobago urges the population to:

- *Wash your hands with soap and water*
  - Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if water and soap are not available
- *Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze*
  - Dispose of tissue immediately after using
  - Cough and sneeze into the crook of your elbow if you do not have a tissue
- *Avoid touching your face*
- *Practice social distancing (e.g. no kissing, hugging, or hand-shaking, avoid mass gatherings)*
- *Stay home if you are ill*
  - Avoid close contact with people who have flu-like symptoms
- *Sanitize hard surfaces (e.g. table tops, handrails, door knobs and trolleys) as often as possible*

The use of masks in public spaces is now recommended by the World Health Organization. However, as there is a global shortage of disposable masks such as those used by healthcare professionals, it is advised that members of the general public use simple cloth coverings.

## How to Wear a Cloth Face Covering



Cloth face coverings should—

- fit snugly but comfortably against the side of the face
- be secured with ties or ear loops
- include multiple layers of fabric
- allow for breathing without restriction
- be able to be laundered and machine dried without damage or change to shape

This link will take you to CDC instructions for making simple cloth face coverings (sewn and not sewn):

[Use Cloth Face Coverings to Help Slow Spread | CDC](#)

# Handwashing

Effective handwashing is extremely important to help prevent harmful germs from spreading from peoples' hands. All persons who work with food must wash their hands:

- when in the kitchen or preparation area
- before preparing food
- after touching raw food
- after handling food waste or emptying a bin
- after cleaning
- after blowing their nose
- after using the toilet
- after touching phones, light switches, door handles and cash registers

Individuals should dry their hands on a disposable paper towel. This is because harmful microbes can spread on wet or damp hands. Use a disposable towel to turn off the tap. Avoid using cloth towels, which are best kept for personal use. This is because harmful germs can spread on wet or damp hands and cloths.

**Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago**  
**Ministry of Health**

## The Proper Way to Wash your Hands

- 1 Wet your hands.**
- 2 Apply plenty of soap.**
- 3 Scrub your hands together vigorously for at least 20 seconds. Wash the front and back of your hands, and under the nails.**
- 4 Rinse your hands thoroughly.**
- 5 Dry your hands with a paper towel.**
- 6 Use a paper towel to turn off the water.**
- 7 Put used paper towels in trash.**

**When to wash your hands:**  
BEFORE, DURING and AFTER preparing food – especially raw meat, poultry, eggs and fresh produce.  
BEFORE and AFTER eating.  
BEFORE and AFTER changing a baby's diaper.  
AFTER handling money.  
AFTER using the bathroom.  
AFTER sneezing, coughing or using a handkerchief.  
AFTER touching any part of your body.  
AFTER handling garbage or trash.  
WHENEVER YOUR HANDS ARE DIRTY.

[www.health.gov.tt](http://www.health.gov.tt) Ministry of Health-Trinidad and Tobago TrinidadHealth MoH\_TT

# Gloves

Gloves provide an extra layer of protection for your skin. It is important to select the right size of glove to provide a snug, but not tight, fit around your fingers and hands.

Remove jewellery or other objects that may tear the gloves. Wash and dry hands thoroughly before putting on gloves. Ensure that each glove is intact, with no tears or holes. After putting on, ensure a snug fit around each finger and palm, and gently pull up the hand to cover the wrists.

It is important that any contaminant on the outer surface of your gloves is not transferred onto the skin or other 'clean' objects, such as your facial covering. If the correct procedure is not followed, this can lead to skin irritation as well as cross-contamination.

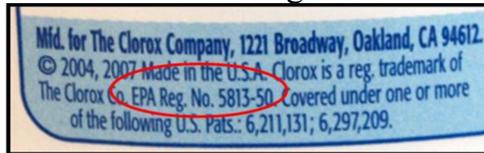
Gloves are best removed as shown below,



From: <https://www.globus.co.uk/how-to-safely-remove-disposable-gloves>

## Disinfection: Which Disinfectants?

- **Disinfectants with at least 70% alcohol or diluted bleach products** are recommended as suitable disinfectants against the new coronavirus. To be certain that the disinfectant you are using is suitable for use against SARS-CoV-2, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has produced a list of suitable products.
- Here is how to find out if your disinfectant product is on that list
  - Look for the EPA registration number on the product label,



- Then insert that number into the EPA list for disinfectants that are suitable for use against the new coronavirus. The link to this list is as follows, [List N: Disinfectants for Use Against SARS-CoV-2 | US EPA](#)

**Vinegar and other natural products are not recommended.**

## How to clean and disinfect surfaces

- **Wear disposable gloves when cleaning and disinfecting surfaces.** Gloves should be discarded after each cleaning. **If reusable gloves are used, those gloves should be dedicated for cleaning and disinfection of surfaces for COVID-19 and should not be used for other purposes.** Consult the manufacturer's instructions for cleaning and disinfection products used. **Clean hands** immediately after gloves are removed.
- If surfaces are dirty, they should be *cleaned using a detergent or soap and water prior to disinfection.*
- For disinfection, most common EPA-registered household disinfectants should be effective.
  - Follow manufacturer's instructions for all cleaning and disinfection products for concentration, application method and contact time, etc..
  - Additionally, diluted household bleach solutions (at least 1000ppm sodium hypochlorite) can be used **if appropriate for the surface.**
- **Check to ensure that the bleach to be diluted has not passed its expiration date.** Prepare a bleach solution by mixing:
  - 5 tablespoons (1/3<sup>rd</sup> cup) bleach per gallon of water or
  - 4 teaspoons bleach per quart of water
  - With a diluted bleach solution, *ensure a contact time of at least 5 minute*, and allow proper ventilation during and after application.
  - **Never mix household bleach with ammonia or any other cleanser.**

### BLEACH SOLUTION TIPS

- ✓ Use bleach only when and where required.
- ✓ Read and follow label of any cleaners you use.
- ✓ Wear label-required personal protective equipment, including gloves when cleaning blood or vomit.
- ✓ Always add bleach to water – to avoid bleach splashes caused by adding water to bleach.
- ✓ Apply bleach solutions directly to a disposable cloth, paper towel, or a non-disposable cloth that is laundered in hot water and dried after each use. **DO NOT** apply bleach directly to surfaces. **DO NOT** use a sponge.
- ✓ If you must use a spray bottle, set the nozzle to produce a heavy stream instead of a fine mist.
- ✓ Watch out for small rooms and confined spaces with poor air flow.
- ✓ Open windows and doors or turn on exhaust fan.

### Avoid This Common Cleaning Mistake:

#### Mixing Bleach Products With Others

Chlorine Bleach  
+ Ammonia = Chlorine gas (deadly)

(Ammonia products like many dish liquids, some window cleaners & many disinfectants)

Chlorine Bleach  
+ Acids = Chlorine gas (deadly)

(Acids like most toilet bowl cleaners, vinegar, & many all purpose cleaners)

Chlorine Bleach  
+ Alcohol = Chloroform (toxic/pass out)

(Alcohol products like enzyme cleaners & sanitizers)

👉 HowToCleanStuff

From, [Guide offers best practices for safely using bleach to clean and sanitize and, http://www.howtocleanstuff.net/is-it-safe-to-mix-cleaning-products-with-bleach/](http://www.howtocleanstuff.net/is-it-safe-to-mix-cleaning-products-with-bleach/)

## Best Practices for Food Preparation/Processing Areas

It is recommended that social distancing of 2metres (6 feet) be maintained as far as possible between workers in food preparation/processing areas. In order to meet this recommendation, there should be an evaluation of the work space to identify ways of reorganizing it. But, it is often not possible to get a full 6 feet between workers, so it is even more important that volunteers/employees use simple face coverings and practice basic protection.

**Volunteers/employees who are sick, and especially those with flu-like symptoms, should remain at home.**

*Remember that good personal hygiene is important in handling food, even in the absence of COVID-19 (see Appendix #1).*

To keep food safe, every person working in a food-handling area must maintain a high level of personal hygiene. They must wear clothing that is:

- suitable
- clean
- protective

When preparing or handling food they should:

- keep hair tied back and wear a suitable head covering, e.g. hat or hair net
- not wear watches or jewellery (except a wedding band)
- not touch their face and hair, smoke, spit, sneeze, eat or chew gum

## **Food Packaging**

According to the World Health Organization, the risk of catching the virus that causes COVID-19 from a package that has been moved, travelled, and exposed to different conditions and temperatures is very low. To date, there is no evidence of human or animal food or food packaging being associated with transmission of the coronavirus that causes COVID-19.

## **Handling Food Packaging**

- Remove any unnecessary packaging and put into a waste bin with a lid. Use the foot pedal to open this type of waste bin.
- Remove food from containers and place on a clean plate or surface. Dispose of the container into a waste bin.
- Packaging like cans can be wiped clean with disinfectant before being opened or stored. Lids of tins can also be washed with soap and water and/or disinfectant before opening.
- Wash unpackaged produce, such as fruit and vegetables, thoroughly under running water.
- Wash your hands with soap and water, or use an alcohol-based hand rub, immediately afterwards.

## **Recommendations for Receiving and Delivering Food and Other Aid**

The work you do with migrants and refugee communities is VERY important. The following guidelines, modified from “*COVID-19 Guidance for Food Banks/Donations Centres*” published by Toronto Public Health, will help you to stay safe at places where you receive or collect donations and in delivering food and other items to members of vulnerable migrant and refugee communities.

### **Receiving or Collecting Donations**

1. Ensure that all volunteers/employees receiving or collecting donations are not ill,
  - a. Ask volunteers/employees to phone in prior to their shift/visit to report if they are feeling unwell, have developed any new symptoms suggestive of COVID-19 (e.g. sudden loss of smell), or have been in contact with a known case of COVID-19. Anyone reporting any of these **SHOULD NOT VISIT** the donation centre or collect donations from outside centres/ donors.
2. All volunteers/employees should wear protective facial coverings and disposable gloves
3. Practice physical distancing to ensure 2 metres (6 feet) separation between volunteers/employees and between volunteers/employees and clients (donors or recipients)
4. Avoid crowding and facilitate physical distancing by scheduling appointments for donors to drop-off donations or for collection of outside donations by volunteers/employees
5. Avoid scheduling large numbers of volunteers at the donation centre at the same time
6. Ensure sufficient workspace so that volunteers/employees are separated from each other by feet
7. Increase cleaning and disinfection of high traffic areas and frequently touched surfaces. It may be useful to designate this specific cleaning responsibility to 1 or 2 volunteers/employees.
8. Put up posters to remind people about ways to protect themselves (e.g. hand hygiene, social distancing, facial covering, respiratory hygiene)

### **Each volunteer should,**

- 1. Increase his/her hand-washing practices (e.g. before and after receiving items and prior to assembling donation packages for delivery)**
2. Avoid touching eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands
3. Avoid shaking hands, and use non-physical forms of greeting
4. Remember to cough or sneeze into a tissue. Immediately throw tissue into the garbage bin and wash hands.
5. If no tissue is available, cough or sneeze into the elbow or sleeve.

## **Delivering food and other items**

1. Schedule deliveries in advance. Contact clients, where possible. Organize departure times, addresses, named recipients and quantities of prepared packages to be delivered.
  - a. Colored labels/shapes on packages could be used for quick identification of delivery areas (e.g. orange for Arima, or green for La Horquetta; specific items for delivery (e.g. circles indicate food, squares indicate non-food items). Color-coding is helpful when volunteers/employees are non-literate or do not speak English very well
2. Pre-bag or box the donations into smaller/lighter packages for easier carrying and delivery
3. Optimise storage space in the delivery vehicle by only having a driver plus (1) volunteer
4. Volunteers/employees who will deliver packages should wear protective facial covering and disposable gloves.
5. Volunteers/employees making deliveries to homes should take the following additional precautions,
  - a. AVOID ENTERING the client's home. Deliver package(s) to the front door without entering the house
  - b. Practice physical distancing and try to maintain 6 feet (2 metres) from other people
  - c. Practice hand hygiene after contact with frequently touched surfaces, such as door bells, gate handles, door handles
  - d. After delivery, remove gloves and wash hands thoroughly with soap and water for 20 seconds. Dry hands completely before carefully removing the face mask.
6. Once delivery and distribution is complete the driver & volunteer must clean all internal touch points of the vehicle e.g. steering wheel, gears, hand brake, handrails, door handles. A chlorine solution with damp cloth or disinfectant wipes are convenient and effective. These can be disposed of in ordinary domestic waste and household garbage.
7. All volunteers interacting with the public must choose, from their own wardrobe, a designated set of clothing that they wear routinely for this duty like a uniform. At the end of each service, these items of clothing should be laundered promptly using household detergent.

## **Precautions for volunteers/employees entering clients homes**

1. Practice physical distancing and maintain a 6 feet from client
2. avoid shaking hands- use non-physical forms of greeting
3. AVOID TOUCHING SURFACES in the client's house
4. Avoid touching eyes, nose and mouth
5. Practice hand hygiene-wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use alcohol-based hand sanitizer immediately after the delivery

## References:

- Ministry of Health of Trinidad and Tobago: <http://www.health.gov.tt/sitepages/default.aspx?id=292>
- International Organization for Migrants- Camp Management Operational Guidelines: <https://reliefweb.int/report/world/iom-covid-camp-management-operational-guidance-frequently-asked-questions-draft-31>
- Public Health England: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-food-businesses/guidance-for-food-businesses-on-coronavirus-covid-19>
- U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA): <https://www.fda.gov/food/food-safety-during-emergencies/food-safety-and-coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19#april4>
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC): <https://www.cdc.gov/foodsafety/>
- U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA): <https://www.usda.gov/coronavirus>
- Toronto Public Health: <https://www.toronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/948e-COVID-19-Guidance-for-Food-Banks-and-Donation-Centres.pdf>

## **Appendix 1:**

### **Always remember the five keys to safer food**

#### **Key 1: Keep clean**

- Wash your hands before handling food and often during food preparation
- Wash your hands after going to the toilet
- Wash and sanitize all surfaces and equipment used for food preparation
- Protect kitchen areas and food from insects, pests and other animals

#### **Key 2: Separate raw and cooked**

- Separate raw meat, poultry and seafood from other foods
- Use separate equipment and utensils such as knives and cutting boards for handling raw foods
- Store food in containers to avoid contact between raw and prepared foods

#### **Key 3: Cook thoroughly**

- Cook food thoroughly, especially meat, poultry, eggs and seafood
- Bring foods like soups and stews to boiling to make sure that they have reached 70°C. For meat and poultry, make sure that juices are clear, not pink. Ideally, use a thermometer
- Reheat cooked food thoroughly

#### **Key 4: Keep food at safe temperatures**

- Do not leave cooked food at room temperature for more than 2 hours
- Refrigerate promptly all cooked and perishable food (preferably below 5°C)
- Keep cooked food piping hot (more than 60°C) prior to serving
- Do not store food too long even in the refrigerator
- Do not thaw frozen food at room temperature

#### **Key 5: Use safe water and raw materials**

- Use safe water or treat it to make it safe
- Select fresh and wholesome foods
- Choose foods processed for safety, such as pasteurized milk
- Wash fruits and vegetables, especially if eaten raw
- Do not use food beyond its expiry date

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