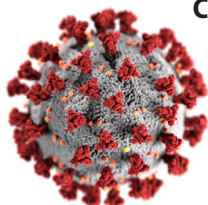


What Airline Workers Need to Know about COVID-19

AIRLINE CATERING KITCHEN WORKERS

Accessible version: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/airline-catering-kitchen-workers.html>

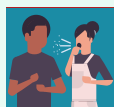


Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is a respiratory illness caused by a virus called SARS-CoV-2. Symptoms often include a fever, cough, or shortness of breath. Our understanding of how the virus spreads is evolving as we learn more about it, so check the **CDC website** (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/how-covid-spreads.html>) for the latest information.

The virus is thought to spread mainly from person-to-person:



Between people who are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet).



Through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs, sneezes, or talks.

Recent studies indicate that the virus can be spread by people before they develop symptoms (pre-symptomatic) or who never develop symptoms (asymptomatic). It also may be possible that a person can get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose, or possibly their eyes. However, this is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads. Older adults and people of any age who have serious underlying medical conditions may be at **higher risk for more serious complications** (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/people-at-higher-risk.html>) from COVID-19.

CDC recommends wearing cloth face coverings (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/diy-cloth-face-coverings.html>) in public settings where other social distancing measures are difficult to maintain, especially in areas of significant community-based transmission. Cloth face coverings may prevent people who don't know they have the virus from transmitting it to others. These face coverings are not surgical masks or respirators and are not appropriate substitutes for them in workplaces where masks or respirators are recommended or required.

As an airline catering kitchen worker, how can I protect myself?

As an airline catering kitchen worker, you could be exposed to COVID-19 in situations such as having close contact with someone with COVID-19 or touching your mouth, nose, or eyes after handling frequently touched items used by someone with COVID-19 such as catering or food service carts or solid waste.

- Limit close contact with others by maintaining a distance of at least 6 feet, when possible.
- Follow your employer's normal guidance for handling solid waste from both domestic and international flights.
- Practice routine cleaning and disinfection of frequently touched surfaces, such as desks, door handles and knobs, phones, keyboards, countertops, and cart and carrier handles. Follow the directions on the cleaning product's label.
- Wear your normally required personal protective equipment (PPE) to perform job tasks.
- Use gloves when handling non-disposable food service items such as cups, utensils and serving trays prior to washing as usual.
- Proper **hand hygiene** (<https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/index.html>) is an important infection control measure. Wash your hands regularly with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. An alcohol-based hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol can be used, but not as a substitute for cleaning hands with soap and water.
- Key times to clean hands in general include:
 - » Before, during, and after preparing food
 - » Before eating food
 - » After using the toilet
 - » After blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing
- Additional times to clean hands on the job include:
 - » Before and after work shifts
 - » Before and after work breaks
 - » After handling frequently touched items, such as food service carts



As an airline catering kitchen worker, how can I protect myself? (continued)

- » After handling food waste and non-disposable food service items
- » After touching dirty surfaces like floors, walls and soiled carriers and equipment
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth.

What steps should my employer take?

Employers of airline catering kitchen workers should have a COVID-19 health and safety plan to protect employees. This plan should be shared with you and your coworkers. Your employer should:

- **Take steps to help prevent the spread of COVID-19 if an employee is sick** (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/steps-when-sick.html>). Actively encourage sick employees to stay home. Sick employees should not return to work until **the criteria to discontinue home isolation are met** (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/disposition-in-home-patients.html>), in consultation with healthcare providers and state and local health departments.
- Provide information on whom to contact if employees become sick.
- Implement flexible sick leave and supportive policies and practices. Consider drafting non-punitive emergency sick leave policies if sick leave is not offered to some or all employees.
- Designate a person who is responsible for responding to COVID-19 concerns. Employees should know who this person is and how to contact them.
- Provide employees with accurate information about COVID-19, its symptoms, how it spreads, and risk of exposure.
- Provide training on proper **hand washing** (<https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/index.html>) practices and other routine infection control precautions. This will help prevent the spread of many diseases, including COVID-19.
- Provide employees with appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) when necessary and providing training on using the PPE.
- Provide employees with access to soap, clean running water, and drying materials, or alcohol-based hand sanitizers containing at least 60% alcohol at their worksite.
- Provide disposable disinfecting wipes so that commonly touched surfaces such as desks, door handles and knobs, phones, keyboards, countertops, and cart and carrier handles can be wiped down by employees. Use **products to disinfect that meet EPA's**

criteria for use against SARS-CoV-2 (<https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2>). Follow instructions on the label to ensure safe and effective use of the product. For food contact surfaces, follow cleaning and sanitizing practices according to the FDA 2017 Food Code.

- Provide tissues and no-touch disposal containers for employees.
- Frequently clean employee break rooms, employee lockers, rest areas, and other common areas.
- Place posters that encourage **staying home when sick** (<https://www.cdc.gov/nonpharmaceutical-interventions/tools-resources/educational-materials.html>), **covering coughs and sneezes** (<https://www.cdc.gov/healthywater/hygiene/etiquette/coughing-sneezing.html>) and **washing hands often** (<https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/materials.html>) at the entrance to the workplace and in other workplace areas where employees are likely to see them.
- Follow food safety regulations related to COVID-19.
- Follow all applicable federal worker safety and health regulations and public health agency guidelines.

Where can I get more information?

Stay informed. Talk to your employer, supervisor, union representative, or airport personnel who are responsible for responding to COVID-19 concerns. See these sources for more information on reducing the risk of worker exposures to COVID-19:

CDC Interim Guidance for Businesses and Employers to Plan and Respond to Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) website: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/guidance-business-response.html>

NIOSH Workplace Safety and Health Topic website: www.cdc.gov/niosh/emres/2019_ncov.html

CDC COVID-19 website: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/>

OSHA COVID-19 website: www.osha.gov/SLTC/covid-19/controlprevention.html

OSHA Guidance on Preparing Workplaces website: <https://www.osha.gov/Publications/OSHA3990.pdf>

FDA Food Safety and the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19): <https://www.fda.gov/food/food-safety-during-emergencies/food-safety-and-coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19>

CDCINFO: 1-800-CDC-INFO (1-800-232-4636) | TTY: 1-888-232-6348 | website: <https://wwwn.cdc.gov/dcs/ContactUs/Form>