Follow-up of COVID-19 in Food Establishments

Guidance & Resources for LBOHs

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COVID and Food Safety

- Can you get COVID-19 from food?
  - Currently there is no evidence of food, food containers, or food packaging being associated with transmission of COVID-19
  - Like other viruses, it is possible that the virus that causes COVID-19 can survive on surfaces or objects
    - Because of poor survivability of these coronaviruses on surfaces, there is likely **very low risk of spread from food products or packaging**.
  - Just like before the pandemic, you should always wash your hands with soap and water for 20 seconds before preparing or eating food for general food safety.
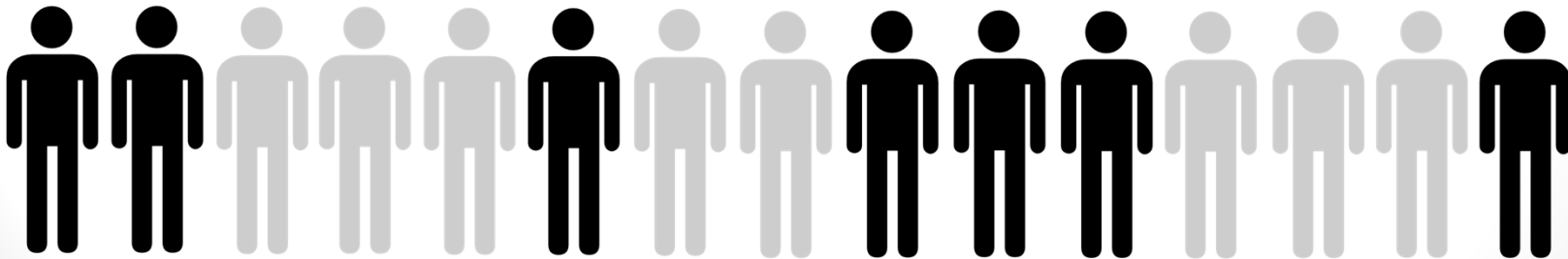
FDA: Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Frequently Asked Questions
CDC: FAQ How COVID-19 Spreads
CDC: Food Safety and Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

COVID and Food Safety

- The more pressing food safety concern when it comes to COVID is **food not being processed or prepared safely due to inadequate staffing in establishments**
- Preventing COVID-19 among food establishment workers protects food safety
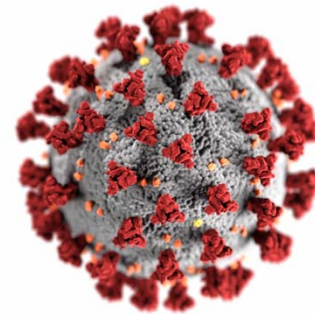
Overview

- Control measures to prevent transmission in food establishments
- Management and follow-up once suspect/confirmed cases are identified
- Using MAVEN to manage clusters in food establishments
- Testing of food establishment employees
- Resources

Food Establishment:
Any facility that grows, processes, distributes, or sells food

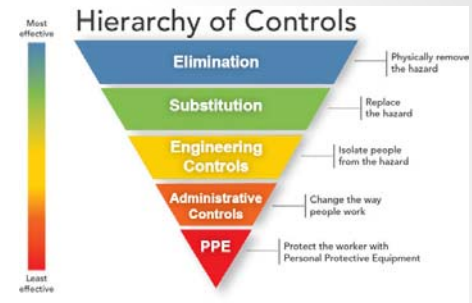# CONTROL MEASURES TO PREVENT TRANSMISSION

Keep sick employees out

- Actively encourage sick employees to stay home
- Employees who become sick while at work should be immediately separated and sent home
- Consider conducting daily in-person or virtual health checks (i.e., symptom and/or temperature screening) before employees enter workplace

Social Distancing

Hierarchy of Controls

- Implement control measures to support social distancing
- Consider locations beyond the physical work space that employees may have close contact
  - Parking areas
  - Break rooms
  - Locker rooms
  - Indoor and outdoor break spaces, including common smoking areas

Administrative	Engineering
• Stagger shifts and break times	• Move/remove equipment and furniture
• Visual reminders	• Use physical barriers
• Encourage employees to avoid carpooling	• Improve ventilation
• Designate worker to monitor social distancing	• Identify alternative areas for overflow

CDC: Interim Guidance for Businesses and Employers Responding to COVID-19, May 2020
CDC: Meat and Poultry Processing Workers and Employers

Food establishment worker PPE

- **Masks**
  - Per Governor Baker's 5/1 Order: "Any person who is in a place open to the public in the Commonwealth, when unable to maintain a distance of approximately six feet from every other person, shall cover their mouth and nose with a mask or cloth face-covering."
- **Gloves**
  - 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.
- **Additional considerations**
  - A hazards assessment should be conducted to identify the need for additional PPE.
    - When engineering and administrative controls are difficult to maintain and there may be exposure to other workplace hazards, PPE should be considered
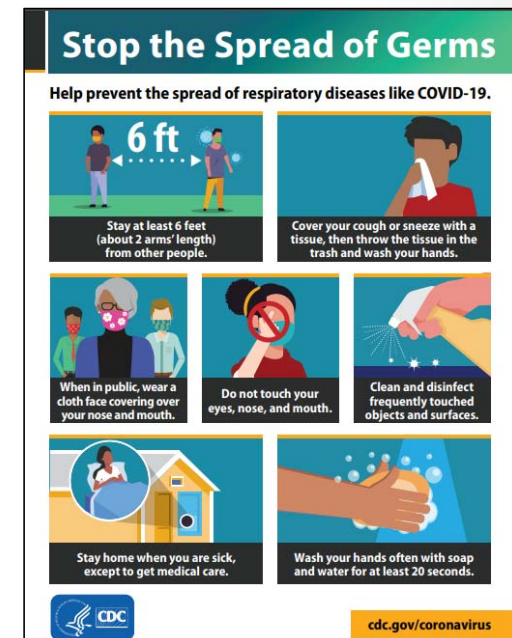
MDPH: Guidance for Face Masks in Public Settings
FDA: Food Safety and the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)
CDC: Interim Guidance for Businesses and Employers Responding to COVID-19, May 2020

Clean workplaces, clean hands, etc.

- Perform routine cleaning
  - Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces; break rooms/rest areas/common areas
- Educate employees about steps they can take to protect themselves at work and at home
- Promote and facilitate hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette

CDC: Interim Guidance for Businesses and Employers Responding to COVID-19, May 2020
CDC: COVID-19 Communication Resources: Print Resources

MANAGEMENT AND FOLLOW-UP OF COVID CASES IN FOOD ESTABLISHMENTS

Management of suspected/confirmed cases

- Ensure employees who test positive for COVID-19 stay out of work until cleared from home isolation, *as determined by public health authorities.*
- Perform *enhanced* cleaning
    - **Close off areas** used by the person who is sick.
        - Companies do not necessarily need to close operations, if they can close off affected areas.
    - **Open outside doors and windows** to increase air circulation in the area.
    - **Wait 24 hours** before you clean or disinfect. If 24 hours is not feasible, wait as long <u>as practical</u>.
    - Clean and disinfect **all areas used by the person who is sick**
        - Once disinfected, can reopen for use immediately.
    - If **more than 7 days** since the person who is sick visited or used the facility, additional cleaning and disinfection is not necessary.

[CDC: Cleaning and Disinfecting Your Facility](#)

Management of suspected/confirmed cases

- Identify, notify, and monitor close contacts
  - Inform these employees while maintaining confidentiality
  - Wearing masks during close contact does not preclude the need for quarantine
  - As of May 4, 2020, the CDC is not recommending that essential workers self-quarantine after an exposure if they are not experiencing COVID-19 symptoms.
    - Employees can continue to work so long as additional practices are adhered to prior to and during their work shift

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MDPH: Non-Healthcare Occupational Exposure & Return to Work Guidance

Clearing employees to return to work

- **Food establishment employees who test positive for COVID-19 should remain out of work until cleared from home isolation, *as determined by public health authorities.***

- The LBOH or Community Tracing Collaborative (CTC) who is investigating and managing a COVID case is responsible for clearing an individual from home isolation, and thereby to return to work
  - You may need to contact the CTC to find out if/when an individual is cleared from home isolation: (857) 305-2828
- If a food establishment has an Occupational Health Program, the LBOH of the establishment could educate the employer on MDPH criteria for discontinuation of isolation and grant the employer authority to allow employees back to work
  - At this time, this does not include cases managed by the CTC

MDPH: Non-Healthcare Occupational Exposure & Return to Work Guidance

Clearing employees to return to work

Employers <u>should not require a COVID-19 test result or a healthcare provider's note</u> for employees who are sick to validate their illness, qualify for sick leave, or to return to work.

MDPH: Non-Healthcare Occupational Exposure & Return to Work Guidance

Testing of employees in food establishments

- Per MDPH's May 13th COVID-19 Testing Guidance: all identified close contacts should be promptly tested
    - All individuals identified as a close contact of a confirmed case (as identified by a LBOH, MDPH, CTC, or healthcare provider), should be tested
    - A negative test result does not eliminate the need for a 14-day quarantine or the need to re-test if new symptoms develop

MDPH: COVID-19 Testing Guidance

Testing of employees in food establishments

- **MDPH is supportive of a LBOH's or facility's decision to do facility-wide testing of employees in non-retail food establishments or grocery store settings**

- <u>If readily available</u>, facility-wide testing of all employees using molecular (PCR) testing should be considered in establishments with suspected or confirmed cases of COVID-19.
  - MDPH does <u>not</u> recommend the use of serology testing in these settings.
- Decisions to pursue facility-wide testing should consider the risk of transmission in the facility due to implementation and adherence to recommended COVID-19 control measures, as well as close contact employees may have outside of the physical workplace.

Testing of employees in food establishments

- A state-wide program to assist food establishments in facility-wide testing does not currently exist as it does for nursing homes or group homes.

- Gillette Stadium (Foxboro) & Big E Fairgrounds (West Springfield)
  - These sites have been identified as available for Grocery Store Worker Priority Testing, and are also available to non-grocery store food establishment workers
  - Call 855-563-7510 and follow prompts for choosing either location

Using MAVEN cluster events

- Consider creating a cluster event in MAVEN if you have identified >1 suspect/confirmed COVID cases in a food establishment
  - Use event to track communication with facility regarding control measures and management of cases
  - Link employee cases across cities/towns to a common event
  - MDPH epidemiologist being assigned as a primary point of contact to assist with any questions or issues
  - Cluster will be shared with the MDPH Bureau of Environmental Health Food Protection Program (FPP)
- Call the Epi Program for assistance creating a cluster event and linking cases outside of your jurisdiction

Using MAVEN employer data to identify clusters

- Please complete employer information in the Demographic Question Package of COVID case events
  - Notify LBOHs of employees who work in food establishments outside of your jurisdiction
- The Epidemiology Program has begun reviewing these data to identify facilities with >1 case that do not yet have a MAVEN cluster event

MDPH Food Protection Program's Activities

- Fielding calls from food establishments and LBOHs
- Performing outreach to FPP-permitted wholesale businesses with one or more COVID cases
  - Developing an investigative outreach and assessment tool for food establishments

LBOH/FPP Jurisdiction

- In general:
  - LBOHs permit retail food establishments including restaurants, grocery stores, etc.
  - FPP permits food processors and warehouses throughout the state
- Anti-communicable disease control activities fall to the LBOH of the establishment
  - If COVID cases are identified in a FPP-licensed facility, LBOH can and should provide control and prevention guidance
  - Communicate findings and concerns with FPP, who will review and discuss possible enforcement action

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Resources

- Massachusetts guidance
  - <mark>Non-Healthcare Occupational Exposure & Return to Work Guidance</mark>
  - COVID-19 Testing Guidance
  - COVID-19 Resources for Agriculture *(Pick-your-own guidance, Farmer's Markets, etc.)*

- General business guidance applicable to the food industry
  - **CDC** <mark>Interim Guidance for Businesses and Employers to Plan and Respond to Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)</mark>
  - **CDC** Cleaning and Disinfection for Community Facilities, Interim Recommendations for U.S. Community Facilities with Suspected/Confirmed Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)
  - **CDC** Interim Guidance for Implementing Safety Practices for Critical Infrastructure Workers Who May Have Had Exposure to a Person with Suspected or Confirmed COVID-19
  - **OSHA** Retail Workers and Employers in Critical and High Customer-Volume Environments
  - **EPA** Disinfectants for Use Against SARS-CoV-2

Resources

- Food Industry-Specific Guidance
  - **FDA** Food Safety and the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)
  - **FDA** Use of Respirators, Facemasks, and Cloth Face Coverings in the Food and Agriculture Sector During Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) Pandemic
  - **FDA** Best Practices for Re-Opening Retail Food Establishments During the COVID-19 Pandemic
  - **CDC** What Grocery and Food Retail Workers Need to Know about COVID-19
  - **CDC** What Food and Grocery Pick-up and Delivery Drivers Need to Know about COVID-19
  - **FDA** Best Practices for Retail Food Stores, Restaurants, and Food Pick-Up/Delivery Services During the COVID-19 Pandemic
  - **CDC-OSHA** Meat and Poultry Processing Workers and Employers Interim Guidance
    - *In the absence of other guidance, this may be helpful for other large processing plants (seafood, food manufacturers)*

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