

Eating takeout and dining in: What you need to know during the coronavirus pandemic

By [Alexandra Deabler](#) | Fox News

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Fears of the coronavirus have caused some people to wonder if even getting takeout food could pose a danger. Here's how to do so in the safest and smartest way.

As the coronavirus outbreak continues to spread in the United States, many restaurants and fast food locations have closed dining rooms, and are only offering takeout or delivery options. Meanwhile, those establishments that remain open have reportedly increased cleaning and sanitizing protocols.

The increased efforts to keep all high-touch areas cleaned and to avoid, in many cases, hand-to-hand contact, beg the question of whether it is safe to order delivery and takeout food. While the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) have said there is no evidence to suggest the virus can be spread through food or food packaging, COVID-19 is believed to be able to survive on plastic or hard surfaces up to three days, or for up to 24 hours on cardboard. To be safe, it is recommended to discard any packaging the takeout order comes in, and transfer it into another dish. Opt to not receive utensils in the delivery bag, and instead use your own clean forks and knives at home. Also, wash your hands with soap and water before and after handling the food — and avoid touching your face, nose and mouth with your hands.

As the virus is mostly spread by person-to-person contact, aim to limit potential exposure by opting for no-contact delivery. Most delivery services, such as DoorDash and Postmates, now have options via the mobile app to have food orders left at the door, or placed somewhere at the orderer's request.

What about dine-in restaurants?

Though many restaurants across the country have been forced to close dining rooms amid the outbreak, there are some that have kept doors open, albeit with increased sanitization efforts. However, according to President Trump's Coronavirus Guidelines for America, it is not advised to eat or drink at bars, restaurants or food courts, especially for vulnerable groups like those over 60 or individuals with underlying health issues. Instead, patrons are instructed to opt for drive-thru, pickup or delivery.

What about having friends over for dinner?

Eating at home is the safest option, but inviting friends and family over can increase your — and their — likelihood for exposure. Instead, it is recommended to practice social distancing by avoiding social visits, if possible, or to limit groups to 10 people or less.