
Protect Yourself from COVID-19

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention offers the most accurate and up-to-date information about the COVID-19 outbreak. The resources below align with CDC messaging and offer science-based information about supporting health with good nutrition.

– Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics¹

Food and water. Although there is no evidence that COVID-19 can be transmitted through food or water systems, sharing food and beverages is discouraged. Home food safety includes promptly refrigerating foods, keeping raw and cooked food separate, and heating food to the appropriate internal temperature.

Wash produce. Rubbing fruit and vegetables under running water—and scrubbing those with hard skins—can help remove pesticides. But Rogers says there's no data to show that COVID-19 is spread by consuming food. Other steps may not make much difference, since there is no evidence that frozen vegetables and fruits are more sanitarily packaged than fresh produce.

Washing hands is especially critical in reducing the spread of COVID-19 and should be done before preparing or eating food. Wash your hands with clean water and soap for 20 seconds at least after being in public, touching your face, coughing, sneezing, blowing your nose, or using the bathroom. Until soap and water are available, use hand sanitizer with at least 60-percent alcohol. Cleaning and disinfecting surfaces and countertops provide protection, as well.

Grocery Shopping². Grocery services and meal-delivery services are having huge spikes in business. Instacart FreshDirect, Shipt, Amazon Fresh and AmazonPrime Now reported big surges in orders.

Senior Shoppers. “For older people and those with underlying health conditions—the group CDC recommends stay home—I highly recommend using a grocery delivery service,” says Jim Rogers, Consumer Report director of food safety research and testing.

Whether you buy groceries in stores or have them delivered, you should sanitize nonporous containers, although FDA has no current evidence to support the transmission of the virus from food packaging. But if you prefer, wipe containers like glass or cans with disinfectant wipes. If that's not practical, wash your hands well after putting away all packaging, including paper boxes and bags. “It all comes down to hand hygiene,” says Liz Garman, a spokesman for the Association for Professionals in Infection Control and Epidemiology in Arlington, Va. It also doesn't hurt to wash your hands after opening the containers and using their contents.

One preliminary study³ found that the current coronavirus doesn't survive on cardboard over 24 hours. So, wash your hands, counter, and other surfaces you touched after putting away your groceries. However, using a disinfectant isn't necessary unless you share space with someone showing signs of respiratory illness or someone who has been exposed to the virus.

¹ Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, <https://www.eatright.org/coronavirus>

² Tobie Stanger, Last updated March 26, 2020, www.consumerreports.org/food-shopping/how-to-protect-yourself

³ Results of the study, conducted by researchers at the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases and other experts, were published on March 17 in a letter to the editor of the New England Journal of Medicine.

Getting Groceries Delivered

Even if a grocery store or warehouse is thoroughly cleaned on a regular basis, the delivery person needs to take the same precautions to prevent the spread of a virus to you.

(Among the six services in our review of grocery delivery services, Amazon Fresh, AmazonPrime Now, Instacart, and Shipt employ independent contractors for deliveries. Instacart has begun offering up to 14 days of pay to all shoppers—including independent contractors—sidelined by coronavirus, plus sick pay to its part-time in-store shoppers.

FreshDirect and Peapod delivery personnel are company employees; and Walmart, which wasn't part of our ratings, uses DoorDash for deliveries.)

While those companies might recommend that deliverers wash their hands often, practice other hygiene measures, and stay home when they're feeling sick, they can't monitor whether drivers are actually taking those precautions, says Erin Hatton, an associate professor of sociology and a labor scholar at the University of Buffalo. "And without paid sick leave, workers are going to try to push through as much as they can," Hatton says.

Ordering for Delivery

Avoid direct hand-off. Have the items delivered to your doorstep or a place nearby instead. Instacart added that option and other companies include special delivery instructions on their order forms. FreshDirect says its drivers will no longer bring groceries into a home.

Tip electronically. One benefit of ordering deliveries online or via an app is that you don't have to hand the delivery person money. Opportunities to tip the delivery person are included in most of the delivery apps and online ordering systems.

Order earlier than usual. Though it's not a safety issue, in the midst of higher demand you may have to wait longer. FreshDirect, for instance, mentions on its home page that delivery times are filling up faster than usual. Amazon Prime Now, which chiefly delivers from Whole Foods, also mentions that "availability may be limited," though it's not clear whether that means delivery times are limited, items are limited, or both. Amazon did not respond.

Pick-up for Pre-packed Groceries

If you ordered and are merely having someone put groceries in your car in a parking lot—an option at about 3,000 Walmarts nationwide—consider opening your car door yourself rather than having the delivery person touch the handle. And if you can tip on a supermarket's app, do so rather than handing over cash. Walmart employees aren't permitted to take tips.

Buying Groceries in a Store

A key way to prevent the virus's spread is to stay 6 feet away from other people. The CDC notes that's generally the distance within which people pick up coronavirus droplets through the air from a cough or sneeze. Such "social distancing" is a good strategy in any situation outside the home, Rogers of Consumer Reports says.

Other ideas:

To learn when to shop at a less busy time, (a) research peak times for foot traffic at the store. (b) Take germicide with you to wipe your hands and the cart before and after you shop. (c) Use a credit or debit card, so you won't have to hand over bills or get change. (d) Use your own pen to sign receipts or (e) use a virtual payment system to avoid opening your wallet at all.

¹ Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, <https://www.eatright.org/coronavirus> editor's note: Originally published March 9, 2020, updated to clarify how to handle produce and food packaging, and how long coronaviruses live on cardboard.

Georgia Legislative Session: What Happened on Cross-over Day?

For bills to pass this session, they must be half-way through the process by midnight March 12th, the 28th legislative day, also known as cross-over day.

As the General Assembly met on March 12th, cross-over day, Georgia government officials knew a dangerous contagion had surfaced in the U.S. and President Donald Trump would declare a national emergency to fight it. As the media reported about “corona virus,” medical professionals referred to it as COVID-19, explaining that the common cold and similar ailments are corona viruses, too. The “19” indicates 2019, the year this virus emerged.

A General Assembly media release Thursday, March 12th began this way: “The Georgia General Assembly will suspend the 2020 legislative session indefinitely after Friday, March 13, the 29th Legislative Day.” It stated further, “The House and Senate will reconvene for the 30th Legislative Day at a future date and time to be set by Lt. Governor Duncan and Speaker Ralston under the terms of the joint adjournment resolution adopted by both chambers.”

Budget passed on cross-over day. That release ended with this sentence, “Earlier today, both the House and Senate adopted the Amended Fiscal Year 2020 state budget. That budget includes \$100 million in funding to address any Coronavirus-related needs which may arise.”

House Speaker David Ralston and Lieutenant Governor Geoff Duncan in a March 13, 2020 letter to members of the General Assembly explained their response to the emergency by quoting portions of H.R. 1473 that passed the House and Senate March 12th. That law allows them to suspend meetings in disasters and discontinue scheduled meetings until the General Assembly reconvenes, which is jointly decided by the Speaker and the Lieutenant Governor.

Cross-over Day in the Senate

Bills that passed the Senate on cross-over day go into the appropriate House committee for further debate.

On March 12th, cross-over day, the House handled 79 pieces of legislation and the Senate handled 42, for a total of 121 bills and resolutions. Those that passed are poised for passage this session. Those remaining in the Senate or House are doomed to failure unless they are amended onto legislation that’s on the road to passage. Of the 121 pieces of legislation handled that day, two passed votes for reconsideration – H.B. 864 and S.R. 854.

H.B. 864 *Tax on Sale of Vapor Devices and Consumable Vapor Products*, first tabled, was taken off the table and passed a vote for reconsideration.

S.R. 854 *Article V Constitutional Convention* had three floor votes on March 12th, but thankfully, failed to pass since it requires a 2/3 vote for passage. Thankfully, 22 senators voted NO and stopped it each time. Regretfully, the 27 voting for a constitutional convention must not realize that once called, the U.S. Constitution could be discarded or irreparably amended.

Senators, Sworn to Uphold the Law, voted NOT to Uphold the Law

S.R. 818 *Only Citizens of the U.S. shall have a right to vote in elections* introduced February 26th by Senator Greg Dolezal was the only bill defeated on cross-over day, although it should have been first to pass. As a proposed constitutional amendment, passage required a 2/3 vote, but only 33 senators voted YES and 19 voted NO. It would’ve passed with 3 or 4 more votes. Their NO vote implies that 19 lawmakers support giving non-citizens the right to vote.

ACTION – Vote AGAINST the 19 who support alien voting in elections. They are: Senators Tonya Anderson, Butler, Davenport, Harbison, Henson, Jackson, James, Harold Jones, Emanuel Jones, Karinshak, Lucas, Orrock, Parent, Rahman, Rhett, Seay, Sims, Tate, and Williams

Kemp, Carden Deploy Soldiers to Fight COVID-19 in Long-Term Care Facilities

GOVERNOR KEMP PRESS RELEASE, APRIL 01, 2020

Atlanta, GA – Over the next few weeks, Governor Brian P. Kemp and Georgia National Guard Adjutant General Tom Carden will activate and deploy over 100 Guardsmen to any long-term care facility - assisted living facility or nursing home - with COVID-19 cases. The Governor and Adjutant General will send troops to specific locations to implement infection control protocols and enhanced sanitation methods to mitigate COVID-19 exposure among vulnerable residents.

"Georgia's top priority is increasing healthcare capacity to protect vulnerable Georgians, especially those residing in long-term care facilities," **said Governor Kemp**. "If we can keep these populations as healthy as possible, we will be able to conserve precious medical supplies and hospital bed space in the coming days and weeks."

"The Georgia National Guard stands ready to assist any long-term care facility in this time of need through staff training and implementation of infectious disease control measures," **said Adjutant General Tom Carden**. "Our training has prepared us to fight this virus, and we are eager to lend a hand in this battle."

Twenty soldiers are headed to Pelham, Georgia today to Pelham Parkway Nursing Home to audit existing sanitation methods, train staff on utilizing more aggressive infectious disease control measures, and thoroughly clean the facility. This facility has reported five confirmed cases of COVID-19. For future missions, only four or five soldiers will deploy to a specific facility. However, for Pelham Parkway Nursing Home, twenty soldiers are going for training purposes.

This assignment is the first of several missions based on close cooperation with the Georgia National Guard, Department of Public Health, Georgia Emergency Management and Homeland Security Agency, Georgia Health Care Association, and Georgia Center for Assisted Living.

Kemp to Order Georgia to shelter-in-place through April 13

Excerpts from Marietta Daily Journal, MDJOnline.com, By Beau Evans, Staff Writer Capitol Beat News Service, 4-1-20
ATLANTA — Georgia will be placed under a statewide shelter-in-place order starting Friday through April 13 as coronavirus infections have brought the state's hospitals to a tipping point, Gov. Brian Kemp announced Wednesday during a news conference. Kemp said he would sign and publish an executive order Thursday that will include a wide range of provisions for the shelter-in-place rules, including for deputizing law enforcement personnel to enforce the order.

Earlier this week, the governor authorized around 100 Georgia National Guard members to prop up operations at long-term senior care facilities where cases of coronavirus have been confirmed. Also, health officials have identified at least five outbreaks stemming from church gatherings plus more outbreaks connected to funerals, Toomey said. She cautioned that any situation in which people congregate now "can be a potential site for transmission." "This is absolutely not just like the flu," she added. "It's many times more transmissible, and it's much more deadly."

Public schools will also remain closed for the rest of the school year, Kemp said at Wednesday's news conference. "We will continue to do whatever it takes to help keep our families safe and ensure a strong and prosperous future," Kemp said. The governor's shelter-in-place order follows mounting pressure from health experts and politicians from both parties who have called for a statewide approach.

"The reality is that if you do not comply, you are violating the law and you will be facing stiff penalties," Kemp said. "Even worse, you are literally endangering the lives of those around you, your loved ones and fellow Georgians." The governor urged people in Georgia not to panic and make a run on groceries. He stressed that supply chains for food and other necessities should remain unbroken. "I want to encourage my fellow Georgians to hang in there," Kemp said. "We must first overcome the obstacles we have in our path. By doing this, we will get through this together."

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