

Safely shop for groceries while social distancing

As recently as a few months ago, grocery shopping was an uneventful chore that few people were likely to remember after returning home. But in the wake of efforts to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 virus, grocery shopping changed in ways that few people will ever forget.

A few simple strategies can help shoppers stay safe as they shop for groceries.

- Wear a mask. Safety guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention are evolving as scientists learn more about COVID-19. One of the more significant changes the CDC made to its initial guidelines was to recommend people wear cloth face coverings in public settings where social distancing measures are difficult to maintain. As communities begin to reopen, certain restrictions may be relaxed, but the CDC continues to advise people to wear masks while out in public, including when shopping for groceries. The

CDC notes that wearing masks may slow the spread of the virus by preventing people who have it but are asymptomatic from transmitting it to others.

- Shop during off-peak hours. Traditionally off-peak hours may no longer apply at many grocery stores, the majority of which have changed their store hours so staff can thoroughly clean and disinfect stores each night. But even if stores are not open as late as they used to be, there's still times of day when fewer customers will likely be in the store. Early mornings may be designated for shoppers in vulnerable popula-

tions, such as the elderly. However, many stores remain less crowded in the mornings than they are during the rest of the day. Avoid shopping on weekends if you

want to steer clear of crowds, as these are the only times when people who are still working can find time to shop. Week-day mornings or late afternoons may be ideal times to shop for shoppers who want to avoid crowds.

- Wash hands before and after going to the store. The CDC continues to tout the importance of washing hands as a means to preventing the spread of COVID-19. Scientists are still unsure about how easily the

virus can spread from contact with potentially contaminated surfaces, but washing hands before and after shopping is a simple safety measure that prevents the spread of germs and potentially harmful viruses like COVID-19.

- Avoid touching your face. The Association for Professionals in Infection Control and Epidemiology note that respiratory infections can be caused by an assortment of bacteria, viruses and other disease-causing germs. Scientists believe COVID-19 is spread through the respiratory droplets of infected persons. These droplets are essentially invisible, but when people come into contact with them and then touch their eyes, nose or mouth, viruses can spread.

As communities begin to reopen, it's important that people remain diligent when shopping for groceries, taking every step necessary to protect themselves and others from contracting this potentially deadly virus.

Shop Safely.

WEAR A MASK!



Thank you everyone!

Your commitment to health and safety is what makes the difference.

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