



**Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) Food Establishments:
Response to Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)
Recommendations**

- **Wash Hands frequently for 20 seconds, using hot water, soap, and vigorous rubbing.**
- **Minimize bare-hand contact with all food products and food contact surfaces.**
- **Practice extra precaution with Highly Susceptible Populations: Nursing Homes, Hospitals, Elementary Schools, Daycares**
- **Avoid touching face, mouth, nose, and eyes.**
- **Sanitize high frequency points: tables, door handles, counters, door frames, chairs, and seating areas.**
- **Stay home when you are sick, except to get medical care.**

The developing outbreak of the novel (new) coronavirus is being monitored by the Texas DSHS by closely working the Center of Disease Control (CDC). Updates can be followed at the DSHS website: <https://www.dshs.state.tx.us/coronavirus/>. Although COVID-19 is not identified as a foodborne illness, it is contagious. It is spread by airborne droplets from coughing and sneezing and by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching one's own mouth, nose, or eyes. Symptoms of COVID-19 include coughing, fever, and shortness of breath with mild to severe respiratory illness.

People who are ill, especially those with symptoms consistent with influenza or COVID-19, should isolate themselves at home until they recover. Such persons should only present for medical evaluation and treatment if their symptoms are such that they cannot continue to be cared for in their home. And, when seeking medical care should call their doctor or health care facility before arriving to allow them to prepare. Food employees should be excluded from the food establishment until cleared to return by a health practitioner.



TFER References:

According to TFER 228.257, certain persons (e.g. physician, physician assistant) shall report certain confirmed and suspected foodborne diseases. The reporting of communicable diseases is required by 25 TAC Chapter 97 Subchapter A Control of Communicable Diseases. Persons-in-charge (PIC) at food establishments shall require food employees to report to them any symptoms of sore throat with fever, according to Texas Food Establishment Rule (TFER) 228.35(a)(1)(D). Food establishment PICs shall assist in the report of communicable diseases by excluding a food employee working in a food establishment serving a highly susceptible population or restrict the employee if they work in a food establishment not serving a highly susceptible population (228.36(8)(A) and (B)).