

10 Tips for Safe Shopping During COVID-19 VIRUS

Grocery store employees continue to work day and night not only to catch up with increased demand for food and essentials during the COVID-19 crisis, but to increase the frequency of cleaning to minimize the spread of the virus. Many shoppers have asked what they can do to stay safe and minimize the spread of the virus while shopping.

Here are a few tips to help ensure a safe shopping experience for everyone:

1. **Only visit the grocery store when it's essential, and then buy only what you need for one week, or a little more.** Be creative with what you have on hand before going to the store and don't overbuy. There is enough for all if we keep shopping patterns normal.
2. **Wash or disinfect your re-usable grocery bags after each use.** For your safety, some grocers ask that you bag your groceries if using reusable bags, while others have decided to temporarily not allow reusable bags to be brought into their stores.
3. **Help reduce store crowding.** Don't bring extra people on your visit to the store if at all possible.
4. **Practice social distancing within the store.** The CDC guideline is 6-feet – the safe distance to help prevent the spread of Coronavirus. An average grocery cart is 3-feet long, so keep a distance of two grocery carts between you and others.
5. **Inspect produce with your eyes, not your hands.** To avoid unnecessary handling of fruits and vegetables use a produce bag to make your selection.
6. **Avoid unnecessary handling of all items in store.** Try not to pick up cans or boxes or other products unless you plan to buy. Let your eyes guide your choice.
7. **Don't crowd the checkstand.**
 - Keep your distance from the person in front of you. As a courtesy, some grocers have marked the floors in and around the checkout area to assist you in keeping a safe distance.
 - Wait until the customer in front of you has finished collecting their groceries before unloading your groceries at the checkstand.
8. **Treat grocery employees with kindness.** They are working hard to provide everyone with safe access to the food and supplies they need. Be patient as they go about their work including additional cleaning protocols and consider acknowledging them with a big "thank you".
9. **Be aware of your store's special hours or procedures.** Many grocers are offering special shopping hours exclusively for seniors or other vulnerable populations. Check out your store's website or call in advance.
10. **Allow for extra time.** Some stores are queuing customers outside their main entrance to reduce crowding within the store.