



## COVID-19 Update, March 16, 2020

Good evening! The state [Department of Health](#) wants to keep you as informed as possible about continuing developments surrounding COVID-19, as well as to provide guidance and resources you can share with employees, clients, or customers. If you want to manage your e-newsletter subscription preferences, you can [do so here](#).

Today Gov. Jay Inslee announced an immediate two-week closure of all restaurants, bars, and entertainment and recreational facilities. **But you know what's still open? Grocery stores!** We are still seeing store shelves that are empty of many supplies, especially hand sanitizer, disinfectant wipes, toilet paper, and plastic gloves. This is because we are "overstocking"—buying too much and making it hard for our neighbors to find products when they need them. Reduce waste and [help your neighbors](#) by buying just what you need.

### Today's Frequently Asked Questions:

**Can I get COVID-19 from food? What about fruits and veggies?** There is no reason to suspect that COVID-19 is spread through food or water. Just rinse raw fruits and vegetables before cutting or eating like always. The governor has closed restaurants for the next two weeks to increase social distancing, not because the food is a risk. That's why takeout and delivery are still good options!

### With the restaurants closed, it sounds like I might be cooking more. Any tips?

You can still support your favorite restaurants by ordering takeout or delivery. But, yes! Cooking at home is a healthy choice, and we love to give food safety tips!

- Only handle food when healthy. People who are coughing, feverish, short of breath, or otherwise sick should stay out of the kitchen.
- Wash your hands thoroughly before and during food preparation.
- Rinse fruits and vegetables before cutting or eating. Bagged lettuces that are ready-to-eat do not need additional washing.

- Wash, rinse, and sanitize cutting boards, tables, utensils, and other food contact surfaces often.
- Read the whole recipe before you start cooking. (Not for your health. This is just a good tip.)

**Do you think maybe I should stock up on some more stuff?** No. Seriously. The stores are open.

**Numbers.** The latest numbers are on our webpage, which we update daily. As of today's web refresh, 904 people in Washington have tested positive for COVID-19, and 48 have died of the disease.

**Practice compassion.** For most of the kids in the state, this was their first day of a long time at home without their friends and routine. Change and disruption is hard for all of us, but especially kids and young families. Send a virtual high five to a child you know who read a book or practiced an instrument or played outside today!

Stay safe,

Lauren

---

**Department of Health call center:** 1-800-525-0127, 6 a.m. to 10 p.m, seven days a week

---

Please check our website for the most up-to-date info on Washington's response to COVID-19 at [www.doh.wa.gov/coronavirus](http://www.doh.wa.gov/coronavirus).