



Suggested Talking Points for Restaurant Operators

This document is designed to help restaurant owners and operators answer questions about the Coronavirus and communicate that restaurants remain a great place to gather with friends and family.

Background

2019-nCoV (Coronavirus) is a virus that causes the COVID-19 respiratory illness. It was first detected in Wuhan, China. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), it's unclear how easily or sustainably this virus is spreading between people. Typically, respiratory viruses are most contagious when an individual is most symptomatic, but there have been reports of the virus spreading when the affected individual does not show any symptoms.

Talking Points

- **My restaurant follows the strict guidelines set forth by the health department.** We have more than XX employees who are ServSafe certified in proper food safety handling.
- **We follow the CDC's guidance and encourage everyone to** get a flu vaccine, take preventative actions like washing their hands often, and staying home when you are sick. This is our advice for customers and employees.
- **Our food supply is stable and safe.** Supply chains presently are not impacted by travel bans. Cargo planes and ships from restricted countries (Italy, China, South Korea and Iran) are permitted into the United States to deliver cargo; however individuals on the planes and ships will not be permitted to disembark.
- **The risk of contracting Coronavirus for an average American is low.** The Federal Government continues to emphasize that the risk to the average American is low. They do expect the virus to spread in small community pockets, but do not see signs of widespread movement at this time.

Practical Guidance for Restaurant Operators

- Restaurant operators should be sure that their staff's ServSafe food manager certifications and certificates are up to date.
- Employers should review sick-leave policies, and ensure they are clearly communicated to staff.
- Review and reinforce safe sanitation and personal hygiene processes, including: washing your hands for at least 20 seconds using soap and warm water. Alcohol-based hand sanitizers are a temporary solution not to replace thorough hand washing.



- Wash, rinse, and sanitize food contact surfaces including sinks, tables, equipment, utensils, thermometers, equipment and public areas including tables and contact areas in the front of the house.
- Do not use surgical or similar face masks if you do not have the virus. These masks are permeable to airborne matter.
- Stay connected to state and local officials. While the federal government is tracking the overall spread of the virus, they are looking to state and local officials to make any decisions impacting the public where outbreaks occur.
- Remember: Restaurant dining is safe when employees practice good and effective personal hygiene processes and restaurants properly and thoroughly clean and sanitize their facilities as instructed in ServSafe classes.

What to do if a customer shows flu like symptoms in the restaurant

According to the CDC, the spread of COVID-19 occurs when people are in close contact (less than 6 feet) with an infected person. Some basic steps that could be taken are:

- Provide the customer with additional napkins or tissues to use when they cough or sneeze
- Make sure alcohol-based hand sanitizer is available for customers to use
- Be sure to clean and sanitize any objects or surfaces that may have been touched

Resources

[State Fact Sheets](#)

[National Restaurant Association Coronavirus webpage](#)