

DAIRY FOOD SAFETY ALLIANCE



COVID-19 and Dairy: Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What is a coronavirus?

A: Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses that are common in both humans and animals.

Q: What is COVID-19?

A: [COVID-19 is a respiratory illness disease](#) that can spread from person to person, and is caused by the novel coronavirus Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS-CoV-2).

Q: Can dairy cows become infected with COVID-19?

A: There is no evidence that domestic cows are contracting COVID-19 or spreading it through milk. There is a different type of coronavirus, [bovine coronavirus](#), that cattle are susceptible to, which is unrelated to COVID-19.

Q: Can COVID-19 be transmitted through dairy products?

A: Both the [Food and Drug Administration](#) (FDA) and [European Food Safety Authority](#) (EFSA) have stated that there is no current evidence that food is a source or transmission route for the virus. The current consensus in the medical community is that coronaviruses are spread from person-to-person through inhaled respiratory droplets due to coughing or sneezing. It can also be spread when someone touches and object with the virus on it and then touches their mouth, face or eyes.

Q: Can COVID-19 be transmitted through the food we produce? What about while handling or freezing food?

A: Currently, there is no evidence that suggests that COVID-19 is transmitted through food consumption, according to the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) (CDC), [FDA](#), and [EFSA](#). Experience with other coronaviruses suggests these viruses survive poorly on surfaces, and thus there is a very low risk of spread from food products or packaging that are shipped over a period of days or weeks. While freezing is unlikely to inactivate the virus, most ready-to-eat products, including ice cream, are made with pasteurized ingredients.

Q: Does pasteurization kill COVID-19?

A: Pasteurized milk and dairy products are safe. There is no evidence to suggest that food produced in the United States can transmit COVID-19. Additionally, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration has confirmed that heat treatment kills other coronaviruses, so pasteurization is expected to also inactivate this virus.

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