

7 Tips for Safe Grocery Shopping Amid Coronavirus Concerns

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Eat This, Not That!
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Social distancing and hunkering down *still* require most everyone to go to the grocery store and load up on whatever products haven't been hoarded by irresponsible jerks. So what are the best practices to stay safe and lessen risks of contracting, or sharing, the COVID-19?

(With apologies to **Gabriel Garcia Marquez**, this post could just as easily be titled "Grocery Shopping in the Time of Coronavirus.")

What follows are some super easy tips to keep you, and perhaps more importantly, others around you, from contracting this disease... or any germs, for that matter.



1. WASH YOUR HANDS

Yes, you almost certainly have heard this particular tip one thousand times, but here is the 1,001 time. The best way to avoid contracting COVID-19 is still washing your hands thoroughly with hot water and soap for 20 seconds. If you are going to the market, make the last thing you do before leaving your home—and the first thing you do upon returning home—be a good hand wash. Want to wear surgical gloves? Fine, but do not let that give you a false sense of security that leads you to potentially touch your face like it's no big deal.



2. GO EARLY

Because grocery stores are at their cleanest and most stocked at the start of the day, many shops have started opening senior-only hours of shopping in the first hour that they're open. It's the logical conclusion of "adult swims" from the community pool from decades ago! If you don't fall into that age bracket and those hours are not off-limits in your area, not only does going early lessen your interaction with others, but it also helps you get the products you want. Early birds get the worm and the toilet paper!



3. AVOID OPEN FOOD ITEMS

Many grocery stores offer hot and cold food bars for shoppers to load up on prepared foods. While all feature a federally mandated "sneeze guard," it's best to avoid food that is open and vulnerable to any airborne particles during this time. (Honestly, even if the coronavirus pandemic weren't in the air, these food bars are something to think twice about if you're worried about catching potential germs.)



4. BE PREPARED

Before you head out, make sure you have everything you need: reusable shopping bags, hand sanitizer, and disinfecting wipes. Make a very detailed list of the groceries you need, and if possible, order it by how you navigate your local store. Limiting your time in the store limits your risk of picking up any contagion. Fomites are particulates that put you at risk and exist on door handles and shop counters, so don't be afraid to hand sanitize or disinfect anything you need to touch.



5. GO ALONE

Presuming you don't need to also keep an eye on your children, try to go shopping alone. The more people that are in the store, the higher the risk. And, since we are trying to limit all interactions, having to chase down a rogue toddler serves no one's best interests at this time.



TOUCHING

6. LIMIT THE

Be deliberate and mindful while you shop. Limiting the number of items you handle not only puts you at less risk, but ultimately makes the store cleaner as well. And while palming your favorite piece of fruit for ripeness is a time-honored produce section tradition, it's best to probably put that particular best-practice aside until the pandemic passes.



7. DON'T HOARD

Unless you are stocking up for summer camp (which is most definitely not in operation at this time), absolutely nobody needs 144 rolls of toilet paper. Be thoughtful and courteous of others who are also shopping for their own families. Buy what you need and nothing more. We are all in this together.