



RD Board Advisory Document

COVID 19 SPECIFIC ADVISORY FOR FOOD HANDLERS

Appendix 2.A

- 1. Employee monitoring and counselling:** The manager of the food preparation and the food disbursement unit must be vigilant about the following:
 - Monitoring employees for any symptoms of COVID 19 and encouraging self-reporting in the event they have come in the contact of a COVID 19 positive patient.
 - This could be done with an initial urgent interactive session and followed up periodically. Stress can be laid on self-reporting and self-quarantine if there has been a contact with a COVID 19, given the sub clinical and asymptomatic states of the disease in the early days of infection.
 - Sick patients must work remotely or take avail of paid leave and should join back only when deemed professionally fit.
- 2. Employee distance and hygiene:** Adequate care is required during food handling at the time of food pre preparation, preparation and portioning as there can be transmission from asymptomatic cases. The following precautions and practices can be followed:
 - Employees to maintain a distance of 1 meter from each other
 - Employees to wear masks at all times
 - Coughing and sneezing etiquette needs to be followed by sneezing/coughing into elbow or using tissues and immediately discarding it in the waste after use. Employees with runny nose and cough must be asked to remain absent from work till they are completely devoid of symptoms.
 - Corona Virus may be active on surfaces and food packets. Thus, for accepting food ingredients and fresh produce delivery, during storage and procurement of the supplied for pre preparation and preparation, the employee must wear gloves and must follow correct hand washing protocol after touching or handling such material. Employees must avoid touching face and eyes.
 - Sanitisers must be provided for all employees and it must be used in the time BUT NOT during preparation.
 - Footfall in the food storage and preparation area from employees from other departments must be minimised and social distancing practiced.
 - Food storage and preparation areas are to be sanitised regularly. Other possible fomites which could have a residual viral load like doors, handles, doorknobs, light switches, trolley jacks, work benches, equipment and any other surface identified by the hospital.
- 3. Food distribution:** The food service employees and food service dietitians are in contact with patients and health care professionals and thus must take adequate precautions. Employees must take the following precautions:



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- Wearing face masks and gloves at all times during food distribution and service – during portioning, packing, during pantry working and during food service to patients and health care personnel
- Avoid touching face and eyes, use sanitisers as appropriate and practice correct handwashing protocols at intervals.
- All eating and drinking utensils and food contact surfaces must be clean and sanitised before use.
- Avoidance of use of food service area by health care professionals for community meal times. Tables to be placed at distance of 1 meter and social distancing to be practiced. Use of disposable food service utensils and cutlery can be considered.