

COVID-19 (Novel Coronavirus) Public Health Guidance for Community Meal Outreach Programs

Recommendations for Keeping your Staff and Your Clients Healthy

March 26, 2020

Southwestern Public Health recognizes there are programs which provide essential services to our community that may be impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and response. This document provides guidance on community meal outreach programs in response to the novel coronavirus (COVID-19).

The COVID-19 pandemic is changing all the time. This information may change. Please visit SWPH's website (www.swpublichealth.ca) updates and more information.

What you should do:

The Ministry of Health has created a [COVID-19 Guidance for Food Premises](#) document.

Planning Advice

- If you continue providing services, complete a risk assessment using the decision-making framework provided by the [Public Health Agency of Canada \(PHAC\)](#).
- SWPH recommends that all clients and staff be screened at every mealtime for symptoms of acute respiratory illness (fever, cough, shortness of breath).
- Guidance on screening can be found at <https://www.swpublichealth.ca/>

Infection prevention and control strategies

- Clients and staff should be advised to practice good hand hygiene (frequent hand washing, alcohol-based hand sanitizer) and respiratory etiquette (sneezing into a bent elbow or disposable tissue).
- Offer take-out meals and avoid serving seated meals (dining).
- Clients and staff should be advised to maintain a distance 2 meters from other clients and staff. This can be facilitated through the physical spacing of furniture.
- Clients and staff should be advised not to share food, drinks, or other items.

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- Consider offering disposable containers, cutlery and cups. These items should be discarded after use in a non-touch waste receptacle.
- Consider offering pre-packaged foods and drinks, if possible.
- For meal delivery programs, consider meal drop-off at the door and avoid close contact.

Maintain cleaning and disinfecting policies

- Facilities should follow their standard protocols for routine cleaning and disinfection, especially for high-touch surfaces such as doorknobs, handrails, light switches, toilet handles, and faucet handles.
- Commonly used cleaners and disinfectants are effective against COVID-19. Disinfectants with a Drug Identification Number are approved for use in Canada.
- Water fountain mouthpieces should be regularly cleaned and disinfected according to the manufacturer's recommendations.

Personal protective equipment (PPE)

- All clients with respiratory symptoms should wear a surgical face mask.
- PPE is not required for administrative staff who do not have direct contact with clients.
- Staff/volunteers in close contact with clients with respiratory symptoms should wear a surgical face mask and disposable gloves.

Adapted with permission from MLHU

For more information about COVID-19: www.swpublichealth.ca