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Food Safety and COVID-19: Precautionary Measures to Limit the Spread of Coronavirus at Food Service and Retail Sector

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ABSTRACT

Coronavirus pandemic has drastically upended the daily life routines of human beings and has wide wide-ranging effects on entire sectors of society. The food sector is also susceptible and substantially harmed by the influence of intensive effects of coronavirus. To ensure food safety and limit the spread of coronavirus at food services and retail sector has become a challenge where delicate and fresh food items are served and delivered to the customers, which have passed through a series of operational steps from order taking, food receiving, preparation of food, packing, delivery to customers. At each step, there is a possibility of food handlers to touch the food surface or food directly and if food handler is not following appropriate precautionary measures e.g. hand hygiene, sanitization and disinfection, social distances, and is touching, then it can be a possible source of coronavirus spread. Since there is no evidence that food is a coronavirus transmission route but during the food operations, improper sanitization and disinfection of key touch points, food contact, nonfood contact, equipment and cleaning tools surfaces and close contact of food handlers with staff and customers not only can put themselves on risk but can also be a risk for customers. Food services and the retail sector should make sure proper hand hygiene, approved sanitizers, and disinfectants in use, follow social distances at workstations and while interacting with the customers. Finally, the business should be vigilant to monitor the temperature of staff and incoming guests to identify if there may any sick person to avoid from further spread of coronavirus and shall report to concerned health authorities if anyone symptoms matching with COVID-19

Keywords: Coronavirus, COVID-19, Food safety, Preventive measures, Social distances, Personal hygiene, Sanitization, Temperature monitoring

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