

INFECTIOUS DISEASE AND INFECTION PREVENTION AND CONTROL COVID-19 COMMITTEE

Bulletin #134c – COVID-19 – ID-IPC – Food Safety – All Phases – Apr 9 2021

COVID-19 Patient Care and Infection Prevention & Control (IPC) Measures: Health care workers and food safety – All Phases

During the pandemic, **health care workers (HCWs) are to take additional precautions to minimize the risk of transmission of infections and to eliminate the sharing of food.** When food is shared there is a risk that the food containers may become contaminated through contact with the hands of the HCWs.

HCWs are **not** to eat or drink in patient care areas, nursing stations or charting areas. The consumption of food is limited to **lunchrooms** and **cafeterias**.

The Public Health Agency of Canada: Routine Practices and Additional Precautions for Preventing the Transmission of Infection in Healthcare Settings advises against eating, and drinking should not occur in areas where direct patient care is provided.

What food can HCWs bring into the facility?

Take-out food

Take-out food from licensed establishments is permitted with the following conditions:

- Must be packaged for **personal consumption** i.e., personal size pizza, burger, sandwich etc. These are for a single individual to consume; there is to be no sharing of take-out food
- **Food that is packaged to be shared i.e.** buffet style packaging, party pizzas, sandwich platters, etc. **is not permitted.**
- The individual delivering the food will need to successfully pass the screening protocol at the facility's designated entrance before the food is accepted into the facility.
- The HCW will be required to pick up the take-out food from the access point.
 - Delivery individuals will not be permitted to deliver within the facility.
 - Staff/volunteers working in the screening area are not responsible for delivering this food.

Storage of Food

The consumption and storage of food must follow [Infection and Prevention and Control Routine Practices](#) where the food is kept and consumed in non-work areas such as lunch rooms.

Lunchrooms

HCWs **must** perform hand hygiene before and after eating.

As facial protection is removed while eating and drinking, physical distancing of two metres (six feet) **must** be maintained.

Lunch and break times should be staggered to ensure HCWs are able to maintain physical distancing of two metres (six feet) and respect lunchroom capacity limitations.