

Should You Raise Chickens? Eight Things to Consider



In difficult economic times, many people consider purchasing chickens as part of their domestic safety net. Raising chickens, however, is distinctly different than stocking up on food storage or bottled water. Chickens are living, breathing beings that need special care and TLC. As a veterinarian, I often see birds that are not properly taken care of, even in stable economic conditions. However, most of this is simply due to lack of knowledge and not from willful neglect.

If you are contemplating purchasing and raising chicks, never

buy them and then try to decide what to do with them. Here are nine important points to consider BEFORE making your purchase:

1. Check with city/county ordinances and HOAs regarding raising poultry to make sure it's feasible where you live.

2. Research, purchase and set up all proper equipment beforehand. Chickens cannot regulate body temperature for the first 3 to 4 weeks of life, and a proper heat source is imperative. Know about all equipment and feed requirements before you make your purchase.

3. Purchase your chicks from National Poultry Improvement Plan (NPIP)-certified sources only. This certification requires rigorous testing of breeder flocks to assure the purchaser that the chicks are free of devastating egg-transmitted diseases. Most commercial wholesalers who sell to reputable feed store chains are NPIP-certified.

4. Be sure you have adequate outdoor space and shelter for the young chickens once they have fully feathered and are moved out of the brooder.

5. Provide plenty of clean, fresh water at all times, and be sure to feed your chickens a nutritious diet based on appropriate commercial feed.

6. Provide them with protection from rats, mice, raccoons, skunks and other varmints.

7. Be a good neighbor. Make sure that your chickens are confined to your yard and are not getting into neighbors' yards or gardens.

8. Practice social distancing with your flock of chickens. (That's a modern term for biosecurity.) Protect your chickens from disease by keeping wild birds out of the coop. Wash hands and disinfect before and after gathering eggs, do not keep chickens in the house, and do not let neighbors and others come to see your chickens. As of current research, COVID-19 is not a problem in chickens; however, there are many other diseases that chickens can contract that are of great concern.

An online poultry-raising course is soon to be rolled out by USU Extension. For information on timing and availability, visit extension.usu.edu or poultry.usu.edu.

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Cleaning with the Coronavirus in Mind



Portrait Of Happy Woman Cleaning Kitchen Worktop

Practicing good hygiene, washing hands for at least 20 seconds, covering a cough or sneeze and avoiding contact with others are all important steps to help thwart the spread of coronavirus. In addition is the practice of cleaning surfaces and locations where others who carry the virus may have spread their germs.

According to The World Health Organization and an immunologist who has studied coronaviruses at the University of Tennessee Health Science Center, the virus droplets can live on surfaces like glass and hard plastics for up to 96 hours. While the estimates are based on data from the 2003 SARS outbreak, the COVID-19 is a “genetic cousin” to SARS and has the same genetic makeup, so the lifespan is very similar.

A more recent study found that the COVID-19 coronavirus can survive up to 4 hours on copper, up to 24 hours on cardboard, and up to 2 to 3 days on plastic and stainless steel. The researchers also found that this virus can hang out as droplets in the air for up to 3 hours before they fall, but most often they will fall more quickly.

Cleaning Surfaces (Non-food)

We are constantly exposed to “dirty” surfaces, which is nothing new, and for the most part, they don’t make us sick. But the highly infectious COVID-19 can easily spread without any known personal exposure to the virus, which most likely means it came from surface contact.

The easy solution is to consciously clean the surfaces around you. Even if the stores are out of sanitizing products, don’t forget that soap and water work great, so start there to clean hands, sinks, countertops, door knobs, etc.

Another option for sanitizing is a solution of half water and half rubbing (isopropyl) alcohol (70% or higher). Straight 70% alcohol can even be poured over a stack of paper towels that has been cut in half, face wipes (but not used on the face) or directly on a cleaning rag to clean remotes, knobs/handles and many other surfaces.

Prepare a bleach solution by mixing 5 tablespoons (1/3 cup) bleach per gallon of water or 4 teaspoons bleach per quart of water. This can be used on countertops and door handles/knobs, but should not be used on electronics.

For tablets, cell phones, keyboards and screens, a microfiber cloth with a 50/50 water and rubbing alcohol (70%+) solution is safe. The cloth should be rung out well and followed with a clean, dry cloth. Do not use paper towels on screens, tablets or cell phones. Most commercial sanitizing wipes are also effective—if you can find them in the store.

To be the most effective, disinfecting solutions of any kind should be used according to the manufacturer recommendations in the amount and contact time suggested for it.

Cleaning Fruits and Veggies

The recommendation for washing fruits and vegetables has not changed because of the coronavirus. Wash produce well with cool water, and use a scrubbing brush on rough-textured produce such as potatoes, cantaloupe, carrots, etc.

The FDA has reported that no COVID-19 virus has been transmitted by food or food packaging. The virus needs a human host, and it cannot grow in food. However, it can remain viable on surfaces, and if a person infected with the virus was shopping and coughed or sneezed on the produce, the virus could potentially be spread.

When it comes to best practices for food handling at home, keep counters and work surfaces washed and sanitized frequently, wash your hands well, and wash your produce well before cutting and preparing it. Here are tips for cleaning produce.

Lettuce and other leafy greens: Fill a large bowl with water and immerse the greens in it. Swish them around to loosen any grit, and let stand for a minute so the grit can drop to the bottom. Place the greens in a colander and run them under cold water very thoroughly, using a sprayer if you have one.

Root vegetables: Scrub under cool running water with a vegetable brush.

Sturdy vegetables and fruits: For items such as green beans, asparagus, cucumbers and grapes, rinse well under a high-pressure stream of water while rubbing with your hands. Let dry in a clean colander if needed.

Tender vegetables and fruits: For softer/tender produce like tomatoes, ripe stone fruit, mushrooms and berries, rinse under a steady but low-pressure stream of cool water, turning the items gently with your hands to ensure all sides are rinsed but not bruised. Spread on a clean kitchen towel or paper towels to dry so they don't get crushed. Because bananas are peeled, just remember to wash your hands after peeling and before touching or consuming the interior fruit.

Consumers who are immunocompromised may want to purchase pre-packaged fruits and vegetables as an added measure of caution or choose to eat cooked fruits and vegetables.

We still don't know how conditions such as exposure to sunlight, heat or cold can affect COVID -19 survival times. For now, data suggests water will do the best job of eliminating it on produce, and it's not necessary to use special rinse solutions for fruits and vegetables. Adding

vinegar or lemon juice to water, or commercial products for produce, if desired, is still an acceptable practice. These additives mainly improve the surface tension of the water to help it rinse more effectively, rather than serve as a microbial kill additive.

As we learn more, it will be posted on the CDC's website of recommendations as well as the USU Extension website for COVID-19 resources at <https://extension.usu.edu/covid-19/>. The Center for Biocide Chemistries <https://www.americanchemistry.com/Novel-Coronaviruses-Fighting-Products-List.pdf> includes a list of products that help fight COVID-19.

Sources:

Centers for Disease Control

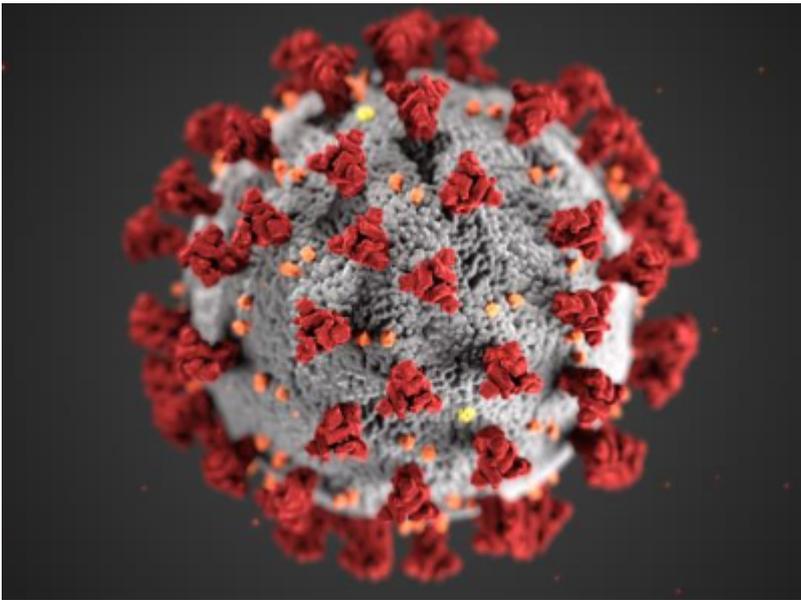
Harvard Health. <https://www.health.harvard.edu/diseases-and-conditions/coronavirus-resource-center>

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Deering, Amanda. Purdue University Extension.

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Is it Safe to Eat Restaurant Foods During Coronavirus Concerns?



Coronavirus

According to the US Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and International World Health Organization (WHO), there is no evidence to support transmission of COVID-19 through food. Take-out or delivery foods from restaurants are safe provided the restaurant strictly follows the US FDA model Food Code.

Covid 19 – Coronavirus

The Covid 19 strain of Coronavirus causes flu-like symptoms. Some persons, especially elderly, can progress to pneumonia.

The WHO has classified this virus as a pandemic, with more than 118,000 cases in 114 countries and 4,291 deaths (as of March 11, 2020).

As a result of the international spread of this virus, many are isolating themselves and restricting outside activities. One activity that is hard to curtail is procuring food. Many are questioning the safety of food and are concerned about its role in the transmission of the virus.

Is it safe to eat restaurant food?

Currently, there is no evidence that the coronavirus spreads via foods. Instead, it is spread person-to-person. This includes spread via an infected person's bodily fluids that are present in aerosols (coughs or sneezes) and on surfaces.

Therefore, the concern is not the restaurant food, but a dining space with other patrons. In response to this risk, many restaurants have closed their in-house dining and have transitioned to all take-out or delivery.

Is take out or delivery safe from Coronavirus?

Take-out or delivered foods are safe from the Coronavirus providing the restaurant adheres to the strict requirements of the US FDA model Food Code. Isolating those with the illness, good hygiene and sanitation are most effective in limiting

exposure to the virus. This includes all viruses and bacteria. Restaurants are required under the US FDA model Food Code to prevent ill workers from coming into contact with food or the facility. They are also required to clean and sanitize all food contact surfaces daily and have done so long before the Coronavirus concerns.

How to choose a restaurant for take-out or delivery?

Look for restaurants that understand the nature of the Coronavirus and provide information on how they adhere to the US FDA model Food Code. At a minimum look for the following:

1. An "A" or 85% food sanitation score on their latest health inspection.
2. A notice to consumers that they (a) monitor employees for the illness and exclude any with symptoms, (b) maintain good hygiene by using sanitary gloves or utensils when preparing foods and washing hands, and (c) clean and sanitize all food contact surfaces at high frequency.

Should I reheat delivery or takeout foods before eating?

Food prepared in a sanitary restaurant with healthy staff should not be exposed to the virus. However, as an additional precaution, reheating foods that are normally consumed hot to

165°F is safer.

Should I avoid fruits and vegetables in delivery or take out foods?

As mentioned earlier, foods are not considered a means of transmission of the Coronavirus. Both the USDA and FDA have cited that imported and domestic foods are NOT considered risks for the virus.

Should I use a delivery service or trust a delivery driver?

Check with the restaurant to ensure that they seal all of your foods for delivery in packaging that cannot be opened by a delivery driver. Restaurants can place tamper-evident seals on packages or simply staple the packaging shut multiple times. Keep in mind that a food operator has little control over the health status of third-party delivery drivers.

Are there any concerns after I receive delivered foods?

It is always safest to assume the outside of packaging has been exposed to the environment and possibly viruses. Remove

food from outer packaging (e.g. a bag or box that individual foods were carried in), wash hands, transfer food to plate, bowl, etc. using clean utensils, wash hands again, then enjoy your food.

Should high-risk persons (e.g. elderly) consume take-out or delivered restaurant foods?

The safest practice would be to consume only foods cooked to 165°F at home. This is advised whether the food is from a restaurant or grocery store. The risk of eating other foods is based on the trust in those that have handled the foods. As a reminder, food handlers are more concern than the food itself.

Trusted Resources:

US CDC <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

US

FDA <https://www.fda.gov/emergency-preparedness-and-response/mcm-issues/coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19>

USDA <https://www.usda.gov/coronavirus>

Photo Source: US CDC (Public Health Image Library).

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Tips for Controlling Fear and Anxiety in a Crisis



Are you feeling afraid, nervous or anxious about the coronavirus and other catastrophes? If so, you are not alone. A threat such as this may only happen once in a lifetime, and we may not feel prepared to deal with it and the associated emotional impacts. The most common of these impacts relate to feelings of anxiety and fear.

These fears are likely caused by distorted thoughts that impact our ability to stay calm and rational. These happen automatically. Some of the most common distorted thoughts include:

1. All-or-nothing thinking. You might think in extremes, or that things are black or white.

2. Over generalization. You may assume that if one negative event happened, then something else is bound to go wrong.

3. Mental filter. You dwell on one negative point, making the entire situation feel negative.

4. Jumping to conclusions. You make negative assumptions, even though the facts may not support them.

5. Magnification or catastrophizing. You blow a situation out of proportion or make more of it than may be merited at the moment.

6. Emotional reasoning. You take the negative emotions you feel as evidence of the truth, allowing emotions, rather than logic, to do the reasoning for you. Can you see a connection between thinking this way and feeling more anxious or fearful?

Unfortunately, we cannot control if these thoughts come into our minds. However, we can learn to manage them when they come. That is where we gain control over the thoughts and their associated impacts. How do we do this?

1. Identify the negative automatic thought. The most helpful thing you can do to stop negative automatic thoughts is to recognize them when they occur. This helps you objectively see that it is the thought or the "what if" that is making you anxious or fearful.

2. Examine the evidence. Instead of assuming that your negative automatic thought is true, examine the actual evidence for it. Find evidence to support the more positive alternative and focus on that evidence.

3. The double-standard method. Imagine a close friend asked you for help with a problem like the one you are facing. What advice would you give him or her? That same advice can help you.

4. The survey method. Talk to people you trust and ask questions so they can help you see the situation more objectively and logically.

5. Re-attribution. Instead of focusing entirely on the problem, focus on managing the problem and finding solutions rather than using your energy on fear and anxiety.

6. Cost-benefit analysis. List the advantages and disadvantages of thinking negative thoughts. Don't put pressure on yourself to never have negative automatic thoughts. Everyone does. I have been teaching these principles for 15 years, and I still catch myself jumping to conclusions and reasoning with my emotions. However, when I remind myself that it is the distorted thoughts that are talking, I can slow the negative emotions that tend to follow.

It will take practice, but it's possible to take back the thoughts that control fear and anxiety.

What You Can do to Help Children Cope with a Disaster? (Or the Coronavirus)



Talk to your children:

- Kids worry more when they're kept in the dark (Ehmke, 2020)
- Not talking about something can make kids worry more.
- As a parent, our goals are to help our children feel informed and get fact-based information that is reassuring rather than the playground chat or on the news.
- Talk to your children in a way they can understand. Keep it simple and factor in the child's age.

Deal with your own reaction:

- Stay calm and reassure your children
- Kids can pick up on the panic and anxiety parents are expressing. This isn't the time to talk to your kids. If you notice the panic and anxiety, take some time before trying to have a conversation with your child.

Remember what you are doing to stay safe:

- Empower your children in giving them information to keep themselves safe. The CDC recommends washing your hands as the primary means of staying healthy. Remind your children that they are taking care of themselves by washing their hands with soap and water for 20 seconds.
- Review your family's emergency plan. If you don't have one, get one done now!
- Stay within your routine. Make sure you are taking care of the basic with regular mealtimes and bedtimes. This is also comforting for your children to maintain their day to day routine.

Keep talking:

- Have an open door for your children to talk about what they are going through and what they are thinking. Always encourage them to share concerns and ask questions.

- Keep them updated on any changes- school closures, etc.
- You can help your children feel a sense of control and manage their feelings by encouraging them to act directly related to the disaster. For example, children can help others after a disaster, including volunteering to help community or family members in a safe environment.

Resources:

Center for Disease Control and Prevention (2020)
– <https://www.cdc.gov/childrenindisasters/helping-children-cop.html>

Child Mind Institute (2020)
– <https://childmind.org/article/talking-to-kids-about-the-coronavirus/>

Tips for Earthquake Readiness



With the recent earthquake near Salt Lake City, many people are wondering how they can be prepared if there are more to come.

Aftershocks following the initial earthquake may occur for hours, days or even months. Earthquakes cannot be predicted – although scientists are working on it. Hundreds to thousands of people could be affected who are relying on their own preparations and each other. Consider these tips to help.

Make a plan for how you are going to communicate with your family after a disaster. Ideas for family emergency communication plans can be found at beready.utah.gov.

Practice, practice, practice. Practice using your communication plan. Practice quickly gathering needed items. Practice the guideline to **drop, cover and hold on** – drop to the ground, cover your head and neck with one hand and get under a desk or table. Then hold on to the desk or table leg with the other hand so it will keep you covered.

Secure large household items that could fall or move. This includes bookcases, flat screen TVs, large mirrors or pictures with glass, water heaters and any other large items that could fall and cause injury or damage.

Consider moving beds or sofas away from windows.

Keep important supplies and documents in a safe and easy-to-locate area.

Plan for the special needs of those in your household, including young children, elderly, pets, those with medical concerns or disabilities, etc.

Be aware of guidelines issued from the Utah Seismic Safety Commission. They can be found at beready.utah.gov.

If you are inside a building during an earthquake:

- Drop, cover and hold on.
- Crawl away from windows.
- Stay where you are until the shaking stops.

If you are outside when an earthquake hits:

- Move away from buildings, streetlights and overhead wires. Once out in the open, drop, cover and hold on.
- If you are driving, bring the car to a stop as quickly and safely as you can, and stay in the vehicle. Again,

keeping in mind there may be buildings, trees and overhead utility wires to watch for.

While we may not be able to predict where and when an earthquake might hit again, if we prepare now, we will be able to help ease the trauma to ourselves and those around us.

For additional information, visit the Red Cross website at redcross.org or the Federal Emergency Management Agency at fema.gov.

Below is a home/family checklist of things to do AFTER an earthquake.

- The first thing to check is that you, your family and loved ones are all safe.
- Check water, gas and electrical lines for damage. If any are damaged, shut off the valves. Check for the smell of gas. If you smell it, open all the windows and doors, leave immediately, and report it to the authorities. Look for and extinguish small fires. Eliminate fire hazards. Putting out small fires quickly, using available resources, will prevent them from spreading. Fire is the most common hazard following earthquakes. Leave the gas on at the main valve, unless you smell gas or think it's leaking. It may be weeks or months before professionals can turn gas back on using the correct procedures. Explosions have caused injury and death when homeowners have improperly turned their gas back on by themselves.
- Turn on the radio. Don't use the phone unless it's an emergency.

- Stay out of damaged buildings.
- Be careful around broken glass and debris. Wear boots or sturdy shoes to keep from cutting your feet.
- Be careful of chimneys, as they could fall on you. Inspect the entire length of chimneys carefully for damage. Unnoticed damage could lead to fire or injury from falling debris during an aftershock. Cracks in chimneys can be the cause of a fire years later.
- Examine walls, floor, doors, staircases and windows.
- Stay away from damaged areas in your community.
- Clean up spilled medicines, bleaches, gasoline or other flammable liquids immediately. Avoid the hazard of a chemical emergency.
- Open closet and cabinet doors cautiously. Contents may have shifted during the shaking and could fall, creating further damage or injury.
- Help neighbors who may be in need. Elderly people, those with disabilities, the people who care for them, or people with larger families may need additional assistance in emergency situations.
- Listen to a portable, battery-operated radio (or television) for updated emergency information and instructions. If the electricity is out, this may be your main source of information. Local radio and local officials will provide the most accurate advice for your particular situation.
- Use battery-powered lanterns or flashlights to inspect your home. Kerosene lanterns, torches, candles and matches may tip over or ignite flammables inside.
- Inspect the entire length of chimneys carefully for damage. Unnoticed damage could lead to fire or injury from falling debris during an aftershock. Cracks in chimneys can be the cause of a fire years later.
- Take pictures of damage to the house and its contents for insurance claims.
- Look for electrical system damage. If you see sparks or broken or frayed wires or if you smell burning

insulation, turn off the electricity at the main fuse box or circuit breaker. If you have to step in water to get to the fuse box or circuit breaker, call an electrician first for advice.

- Check for sewage and water line damage. If you suspect sewage lines are damaged, avoid using the toilets and call a plumber. If water pipes are damaged, contact the water company and avoid using water from the tap. You can obtain safe water from undamaged water heaters or by melting ice cubes.
- Watch for loose plaster, drywall and ceilings that could fall.
- Check food and water supplies and storage items.
- Expect aftershocks, and stay alert for them. Move cars out of the garage and have 72-hour kits in a quick and easy place to grab. Consider keeping them in the car.
- Watch animals closely. Leash dogs and place them in a fenced yard. The behavior of pets may change dramatically after an earthquake. Normally quiet and friendly cats and dogs may become aggressive or defensive.
- Stay calm yourself, and talk to children about safety.
- Register with the American Red Cross that you are safe and well at <https://safeandwell.communityos.org/>

Sources:

Be Ready Utah

American Red Cross

California Seismic Safety

FEMA

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Discover 4-H At Home



Discover 4-H

Due to school cancellations, parents now have extended time with children. Rather than viewing it as a sentence, look at it as an opportunity with your child that you may never get again! The things happening now will certainly be remembered and talked about for many years to come, so try to make your home environment positive and comforting amidst all the chaos. Here are some ideas.

Discover 4-H

Families who are looking for engaging STEM and self-contained activities will love the Discover 4-H Curriculum. It is a full guide that can help children explore topics in categories such as cooking, arts, outdoors, STEM and even emergency

preparedness. Choose your own adventure and have fun! [View Discover 4-H Curriculum](#)

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USU Extension Offers Resources For Challenges of COVID-19



The new coronavirus (COVID-19) has become a world-wide concern, with new travel restrictions and school and event cancellations daily. There are many factors to consider, from health and safety and sheltering in place, to food storage, talking to children about a pandemic and mental anxiety.

Utah State University Extension provides research-backed information to help Utah residents as they maneuver the challenges this new virus brings. The website extension.usu.edu/covid-19/ is a hub for Extension resources that includes videos, fact sheets, links and press releases. Included are such areas as working and businesses, sanitization, food, self and social care, parenting, finance, emergency response and self-reliance. The site will be updated regularly to include new information.