



First Nations Health Authority  
Health through wellness

# Sharing the Harvest during the Pandemic

## Safety Precautions for Distributing Traditional Foods

Traditional food and sharing the harvest are activities with meaningful social, cultural, and food security benefits for many BC First Nations communities. Sharing with family, Elders and other community members is an integral part of who we are as First Nations people.

Given the current response to COVID-19, the FNHA wants to ensure you have information on safely sharing traditional foods, such as fish, wild meat or berries.

COVID-19 is a virus mainly spread from person-to-person through respiratory droplets. However, the COVID-19 virus may remain on surfaces from hours to days. In addition to the usual food safety precautions, special measures are needed to keep people safe during the COVID-19 pandemic.

### TAKE SAFETY PRECAUTIONS

- Anyone who has been ill or has been exposed to the virus should stay home and not participate in any food harvesting or distribution activity.
- The most important thing you can do to prevent infection is to wash your hands frequently during food distribution and avoid touching your face. Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If a sink is not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer. More details about handwashing are in this poster.
- Stay at least two meters (six feet) away from other people. This means avoiding usual greetings like handshakes and hugs.
- Fish, hunt and gather only with those in your household.

### TIPS FOR SAFE FOOD DISTRIBUTION

- Develop a plan to minimize physical interactions and reduce contamination of surfaces that are commonly touched.

- Communicate with recipients prior to distribution (e.g., schedule pick-up times and/or delivery times with confirmation that community members are available to receive).
- Use hard-sided containers with easy to clean surfaces to transport harvested foods.
- Foods requiring temperature control (e.g., fish and wild meat) should be transported on ice if refrigeration is not available.
- If transfer of harvested food is necessary, do so without touching the community member's container.
- Food should be delivered whole if possible.
- When food needs to be divided into portions for distribution, use usual food safety precautions and practice physical distancing.
- Frequently clean and disinfect commonly touched surfaces.
- Maintain logs of all pick-ups and deliveries.

## CLEANING SUPPLIES TO HAVE ON HAND

- Disposable gloves
- Hand sanitizer
- Handwashing liquid soap
- Disinfectant/Sanitizer solution
- Sanitizer spray bottle
- Clean cloths, garbage bags, and paper towels

## DOOR-TO-DOOR SERVICE MINIMIZES PHYSICAL INTERACTION

- If a delivery driver accompanies the delivery person, the driver should preferably be from the same household.
- Containers should be left in a designated location outside the home. Avoid using doorknockers or bells. Call on arrival if possible, to allow cold items to be taken in ASAP.
- If containers cannot be left outside, gloves and a cloth mask can be worn, and surfaces in the vehicle should be disinfected and hands washed when the task is completed.

## PROVIDE COMMUNITY PICK-UP IF DOOR-TO-DOOR SERVICE IS NOT POSSIBLE

- Choose a location that allows recipients who are waiting to pick-up harvested food to maintain two metres (six feet) of separation at all times.
- Plan the space to ensure physical distancing and regular handwashing/hand sanitizing can be maintained when distributing the harvested food.
- Harvested foods can be placed directly into vehicles so there is no contact between individuals.

## CLEANING GUIDELINES

- Regularly clean and sanitize all surfaces that may come in contact with the harvested food, including the inside of containers. These surfaces do not need to be disinfected.
- Before each delivery, clean and disinfect any surfaces that you will touch on containers (e.g., handles, lids, and the outside of containers).

## CLEANING TERMINOLOGY

### Cleaning

- Use detergent and water.

### Sanitizing

- Appropriate for surfaces that may come in contact with food. [Learn more here.](#)
- Use a 100-200 ppm bleach solution.

### Disinfecting

- Used at higher concentrations than sanitizers and require a longer contact time.
- May need potable water to rinse off.
- Confirm that disinfectant is suitable. A list of hard-surface disinfectants with a DIN and a claim to deactivate viruses can be [found here.](#)

## RECEIVING PREPARATIONS

**Home delivery is recommended for anyone that is ill or has been exposed to COVID-19.**

**Distributor's Food Container:** If you are receiving foods in the container provided by the food distributor, clean and sanitize the surfaces that may come in contact with food. You will also need to disinfect areas of the container that will be commonly touched prior to bringing it inside or transferring the harvested foods into their own containers.

**Personal Food Container:** If you are receiving harvested foods in a personal container, wash your hands, clean and sanitize the surfaces that may come in contact with the food and disinfect areas that will be commonly touched prior to leaving your container out for the delivery person. The lid should be off and there should be ice inside the container if the harvested foods require temperature control (e.g., fish and wild meat). Place the container outside just prior to scheduled delivery.

**Picking Up Harvested Foods:** If you are picking up harvested foods, bring clean, sanitized and disinfected personal containers.

## RESOURCES

[Fishing and Hunting COVID-19 Updates](#)

[Food Safety](#)

[COVID-19 Information for BC First Nations Individuals](#)

[Cleaning and Disinfecting](#)