



27 May 2020 – It is highly unlikely that people can get COVID-19 from food or food packaging; however, it is imperative for the food industry to reinforce personal hygiene measures and provide refresher training on food hygiene principles to eliminate or reduce the risk of food surfaces and food packaging materials becoming contaminated with the virus from food workers.

Personal protective equipment (PPE), such as masks and gloves, can be effective in reducing the spread of viruses and disease within the food industry but only if used properly. The food industry is strongly advised to introduce physical distancing and stringent hygiene and sanitation measures and promote frequent and effective handwashing and sanitation at each stage of food processing, manufacture and marketing. These measures will protect staff from spreading COVID-19 among workers, maintain a healthy workforce, and detect and exclude infected food handlers and their immediate contacts from the workplace.

The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic presents an unprecedented challenge for competent authorities with responsibilities for national food safety control systems to continue conducting routine functions and activities in accordance with national regulations and international recommendations. To preserve the integrity of the national food safety control system and to support international trade and the food supply chain, each competent authority needs to prioritize critically important services during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

In Lebanon, decisions related to the inspection of the required food safety and hygiene measures in different food sectors (food industries and retails, restaurants and supermarkets) in response to COVID-19 were issued by the different concerned authorities. Food safety inspection has restarted in food services mainly focused on food hygiene practices and preventive hygiene measures to confront the COVID-19 pandemic. □

Lebanon will use the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic as a window of opportunity to further strengthen food safety and hygiene measures to protect public health in general and the safety of workers in the food sectors.□

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