



NJFC SAFE SHOPPING TIPS FOR CUSTOMERS

We are providing the best practical guidelines to keep shoppers and grocery store workers safe during the COVID-19 crisis. Please use these helpful Safe Shopping Tips that include several new government mandates.

1. Limit going to the grocery store only when it is essential and focus on buying what you need.

Coronavirus has upended our daily lives and the usual grocery store trips are a luxury. As experts advise the general public to stay home, it is important that customers limit their trips to the store as much as possible. When you do shop, buy what you need most. There is no need to stockpile items. Buying enough for one week is advisable. If everybody maintains normal shopping patterns, the food supply will replenish.

2. Shoppers must now wear cloth face coverings.

It is now a NJ mandate by Governor Phil Murphy that all customers wear cloth face coverings to enter a store. Please note that these coverings can be made from everyday household items such as a scarf, bandana, or t-shirt. Here's an easy how-to [video](#). Reserve N95 masks for frontline workers.

3. Reduce store crowding by shopping alone.

Some of us really enjoy going to the grocery store with our spouse or families, but to keep everyone safe, shop alone if you can. By reducing capacity, it is easier to maintain less crowded aisles and safe social distancing between customers.

4. Practice safe social distancing throughout the store even at checkout.

Six feet is the safe distance to help prevent the spread of coronavirus. An average grocery cart is three feet long, so always keep two grocery carts apart between you and others. Although checkout signifies the end of your trip, it is still important that you maintain six feet or two shopping carts of space between you and someone else. To protect everyone's wellbeing, please wait until a customer finishes loading their groceries and exits the line.

5. Avoid handling any items in the store, unless it's for purchase. Use your eyes to inspect, not your hands.

Habits are hard to break but avoiding the handling of products at the store helps prevent the spread of the virus. Do your part and try not to pick up items unless you plan to buy them. This also applies to produce items. We recommend using a produce bag to make your selection. Let your eyes do the shopping.

6. When using personal protective equipment (PPE) such as gloves, wipes, or disposable face coverings please discard responsibly.

Since customers are mandated to wear facial coverings and are using PPE for added safety, it is important to dispose of gloves, masks and wipes properly. Please do not leave these soiled items in your cart or in the parking lot. Mishandling these items can create more safety concerns for employees and other customers. Trash cans are placed conveniently outside the store for your disposal. Moreover, refrain from disposing flushable wipes in the store restrooms.

7. Keep your reusable grocery bags at home until this health crisis is over or thoroughly disinfect after each use.

For the safety of both customers and employees, do not use reusable bags unless you know how to thoroughly disinfect them. Studies have shown that the virus can live on certain surfaces for an extended period. Using bags that are kept in an individual's home or car for repeat use could increase the risk of infection. You might be asked to bag your own groceries depending on the store's temporary policies with reusable bags.

8. Check your local store's special hours or new procedures.

To ensure the safest shopping experience, grocers are adapting special hours and accommodations. Check their websites, social media pages, or call ahead to confirm.

9. Be patient and allot more time to shop.

New mandates have created crowd control policies that potentially slow down a normal shopping experience. Be cognizant of this and be prepared with extra time in case it is needed to shop.

10. Treat employees with respect and kindness.

As NJ Governor Phil Murphy has [stated](#), grocery store workers are “mission critical” during this crisis. They are working on the frontline to ensure everyone always has access to food and supplies. Be understanding of the extra work being provided to make sure a store is sanitized and ready to feed your families.

These simple tips will help provide for a more pleasant shopping experience!

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