

Sharing Meals at Work: Infection Prevention Guidelines

This document provides guidelines for DUHS team members on safely consuming shared food with others in the hospital and clinic settings.

As a reminder, eating with others indoors continues to be a higher-risk activity for the spread of COVID-19, as we have not reached 100% employee vaccination rate. Clusters of healthcare worker infections at Duke have been linked to larger gatherings in breakrooms where staff could not maintain 6 feet of distance. Let's all do our part to keep each other safe.

General information about the spread of COVID-19 infection

- Coronaviruses are spread from person-to-person through infectious respiratory droplets and aerosols.
- A person may become infected with COVID-19 when infectious droplets/aerosols contact mucous membranes of the eyes, mouth, nose, or small airways.

Eating with others

When eating and drinking, face masks need to be removed and stored. To lower the risk of exposure to DUHS team members, the below measures should be followed:

- Maintain at least 6 feet of separation from others when eating.
- Perform hand hygiene before and after mask removal or consumption of food and drink.
- Clean eating surfaces prior to and after consuming food and drink.



Sharing food

Please follow these guidelines to ensure that communal food consumption does not increase the risk of transmitting COVID-19 to our team members:

- Eating during Duke-sponsored meetings and conferences is prohibited. Avoid scheduling in-person meetings during mealtimes or shorten meetings and conferences during the noon-hour to allow for people to eat before/after the meeting or conference.
- If providing food/drink for team members, it should be individually packaged (preferred) or served by designated individual(s) who perform hand hygiene before and after using serving utensils.
- When possible, use outdoor spaces as venues for group gatherings where food will be consumed.

References

1. <https://www.fda.gov/food/food-safety-during-emergencies/food-safety-and-coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19>
2. <https://www.cdc.gov/foodsafety/newsletter/food-safety-and-Coronavirus.html>