



**Quad Cities COVID-19 Coalition  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
April 23, 2020**

**Current COVID-19 case count**

**Scott County** – 5 new cases for a total of 188.

**Rock Island County** – 18 new cases for a total of 320. 25 patients are in the hospital

**We likely have not hit our peak**

Remarks from Edward Rivers, director of the Scott County Health Department

There is much discussion on when various parts of society can open back up to allow people to get back to work, to open up shops, and to begin providing services. However, remember that our community has likely NOT experienced our peak of COVID-19 spread in the community.

Generally speaking, each community is on its own timeline for the spread of COVID-19 and will have its own timeline for recovery from COVID-19. Today Iowa Gov. Kim Reynolds indicated that discussions currently occurring may lead to loosening restrictions, and reopening businesses, but that this could occur on a regional, or even individual county level. Illinois Gov. J.B. Pritzker announced Thursday that he extended a statewide stay-at-home order until May 30.

Please continue to listen to the messages that are coming out from the Iowa and Illinois governors, from the Iowa and Illinois Department of Public Health, and from the Scott and Rock Island County Health Departments to help understand what is currently taking place in our community and where we are headed in the upcoming days.

**Share accurate information**

Remarks from Nita Ludwig, administrator of the Rock Island County Health Department

You've probably seen the wild information going around on social media about COVID-19. Most of it probably isn't completely true. We all owe it to each other to tamp down the misinformation.

Do your part to stop the spread of rumors by doing three easy things:

- Find trusted sources of information
- Share information from these trusted sources
- Discourage others from sharing information from unverified sources.

To find trusted sources, look for information from official public health and safety authorities. You can find many official sources at [coronavirus.gov](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus). Both the Illinois and Iowa Departments of

Public Health and the Rock Island and Scott County Health Departments are putting out trusted information on their websites and social media accounts.

## **Recommendations**

We all must continue to do our part by:

- Social distancing by staying at home as much as possible
- Keeping at least 6 feet between you and anyone else
- Washing your hands frequently with soap and water for at least 20 seconds each time and using hand sanitizer when washing your hands is not possible
- Covering coughs and sneezes with a tissue or into your elbow
- Wearing a face covering when you must go out for essential supplies
- Staying home when you are ill

## **Food and cleaning safety tips**

Remarks from Kristin Bogdonas, nutrition and wellness educator, University of Illinois Extension

Current guidance from the Food and Drug Administration, or FDA, states that “there is no evidence to suggest that food produced in the United States can transmit COVID-19.” However, home delivery of meals presents a potential risk. There are several things we can do to ensure our food stays safe when ordering takeout and grab-n-go meals. As always, it is important that food safety steps such as sanitizing, safe food handling and storage are also followed during this time to prevent foodborne illness.

### **Food safety tips for takeout containers:**

- Ask for contactless delivery. This can prevent transferring harmful germs from person to person.
- Take food out of containers or bags using clean silverware or tongs, and place on a clean plate, bowl, or in storage containers before eating.
- Dispose of or recycle takeout containers appropriately.
- Clean and sanitize all surfaces the packaging came into contact with. Learn how to make your own sanitizer (see additional resources).

### **Food safety step: CLEAN**

- Wash hands with plain soap and water before eating for 20 seconds. Additionally, wash any surfaces that come in contact with food or what the food was picked up or delivered in.
- Rinse fresh fruits and vegetables that come with the meal (even if you’re going to peel them). Use a clean vegetable brush to scrub firm fruits and vegetables like melons and avocados.

- According to the FDA, washing fruits and vegetables with soap, detergent or commercial produce wash is not recommended.
- Don't wash raw meat, chicken, turkey, or eggs. Cooking them thoroughly will kill harmful germs.

### **Food safety step: COOK**

- Keep hot foods hot. If a meal is received hot, eat it right away or keep it hot at 140 degrees Fahrenheit or above until you are ready to eat it. Always use a food thermometer to make sure the food is at a safe temperature.
- Two-Hour Rule: Cooked food should not sit at room temperature for more than two hours. It only takes two hours for harmful bacteria to multiply to a quantity that could cause foodborne illnesses.

### **How to safely keep "hot food hot" at home:**

- Move food from takeout containers into a skillet, pot, or sauce pan, and keep food hot on the stovetop.
- Use the oven. Preheat oven and place food on an oven-safe pan or dish. Cover with aluminum foil to prevent food from drying out.
- Place cooked food in a preheated slow cooker to keep hot. Never reheat food in a cold slow cooker.

### **Food safety step: CHILL**

- Chill groceries, leftovers, and food delivery items within 2 hours.
- If a meal is received cold, it should be kept at a temperature of 40 °F or below.
- Leave space for air to circulate between containers in your fridge and freezer.
- How to safely keep "cold food cold" at home:
- Keep refrigerator set at 40 degrees Fahrenheit or below. Store items immediately in the refrigerator until use.
- Check food temperatures using a food thermometer to ensure food is staying at 40 degrees Fahrenheit or below.

### **Food safety step: REHEATING**

If the meal will not be eaten right away, divide it into smaller portions and store in the refrigerator. Use shallow food-safe containers, no more than four inches deep. Use a food thermometer to reheat food to 165 degrees Fahrenheit, no matter the food or method.

### **Not all kitchen appliances are safe for reheating**

- Safe for reheating: oven (no lower than 325 degrees Fahrenheit), stove-top, microwave oven
- Not safe for reheating: slow cooker, chafing dish

## **Cleaning advice**

Sanitizing can help prevent cross contamination and spread of germs but unsafe practices can be harmful and land you in a medical emergency.

According to Illinois Poison Center data, exposures to cleaning products are up 30 percent, compared to last year. As more people are sanitizing to stop the spread of COVID-19 remember to follow these safety steps when preparing and using home sanitizing solutions:

- Follow the manufacturer's safety instructions when working with bleach and other household cleaning products.
- Keep all cleaning products separate from food products.
- Never mix cleaning chemicals together. Examples of toxic combinations include bleach and ammonia, bleach and rubbing alcohol, bleach and vinegar as well as hydrogen peroxide and vinegar.
- Keep small children and pets away from sanitized surfaces until the surfaces are dry.
- If you suspect that you or someone you know has been exposed to a potentially harmful substance, please call the IPC at 800-222-1222.

## **Additional food and cleaning resources**

- [University of Illinois Extension Resources for Responding to COVID-19](#)
- [University of Illinois Extension - Unit 7 \(Henry, Mercer, Rock Island and Stark Counties\)](#)
- [How to Make Your Own Bleach Sanitizer PDF](#)
- [How to Make Your Own Bleach Sanitizer PDF \(Spanish\)](#)
- [Foodsafety.gov](#) - your gateway to federal food safety information
- [Illinois Poison Center](#)

## **More information and video**

- [www.TogetherQC.com](http://www.TogetherQC.com)
- Flattening the Curve Resource: <https://covid19.healthdata.org/united-states-of-america>
- Together Quad Cities: Keep Staying Home video: <https://youtu.be/GG0hRvJ0So>
- IDPH COVID-19 PSA (television): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FvsF02uCM-M&feature=youtu.be>
- IDPH COVID-19 PSA (radio): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xznWLKeZO3E&feature=youtu.be>

###