



## **SUPERMARKET SHOPPING AND POST/DELIVERIES**

We are all thinking twice about how they might be exposed to covid-19 if we open a box delivered by courier, touch packages at the grocery store or accept food delivery.

First, disease transmission from inanimate surfaces is real, so I don't want to minimize that but in most cases the risk is quite easily minimised..... Let me explain:

In grabbing headlines: The coronavirus that causes covid-19 "was detectable . . . up to four hours on copper, up to 24 hours on cardboard and up to two to three days on plastic and stainless steel." The key word here is "detectable."

Yes, the virus can be detected on some surfaces for a few days, but the reality is that the levels do drop off quickly. Now, let's examine the full chain of events that would have to exist for you to get sick from a contaminated package at your door or carton of milk from the Supermarket.

In the case of the package,

- the driver would have to be infected and still working despite limited symptoms. (If they were very ill, they would most likely be home; if they had no symptoms, it's unlikely they would be coughing or sneezing frequently.)
- Let's say they wipe their nose, don't wash their hands and then transfer some virus to your package.
- Even then, there would be a time lag from when they transferred the virus until you picked up the package at your door, with the virus degrading all the while. In the worst-case scenario, a visibly sick driver picks up your package from the truck, walks to your front door and sneezes into their hands or directly on the package immediately before handing it to you.
- Even in that highly unlikely scenario, **you can break this causal chain.**

**This is what you can do to cut the chain.**

- You can leave that cardboard package at your door for a few hours — or bring it inside and leave it right inside your door, then wash your hands again.
- If you're still concerned there was any virus on the package, you could wipe down the exterior with a disinfectant, or open it outdoors and put the packaging in the recycling can. (Then wash your hands again.)

**What about going to the grocery store? The same approach applies.**

- Shop when you need to (keeping 2 meters from other customers) and load items into your cart or basket.
- Keep your hands away from your face while shopping, and wash them as soon as you're home.
- Put away your groceries, and then wash your hands again.
- If you wait even a few hours before using anything you just purchased, most of the virus that was on any package will be significantly reduced.
- If you need to use something immediately, and want to take extra precautions, wipe the package down with a disinfectant.
- Last, wash all fruits and vegetables as you normally would.

We should all be grateful for those who continue to work in food production, distribution and sales, and for all those delivery drivers. They're keeping us all safer by allowing us to stay home. And, as I said, the risk of disease transmission from surfaces is real. We can never eliminate all risk; the goal is to minimize it — because we all will occasionally need to go grocery shopping and receive supplies in the mail.

But if you take basic precautions, including washing your hands frequently, the danger from accepting a package from a delivery driver or from takeout from a local restaurant or from buying groceries is de minimis. That's a scientific way of saying, "The risks are small, and manageable."