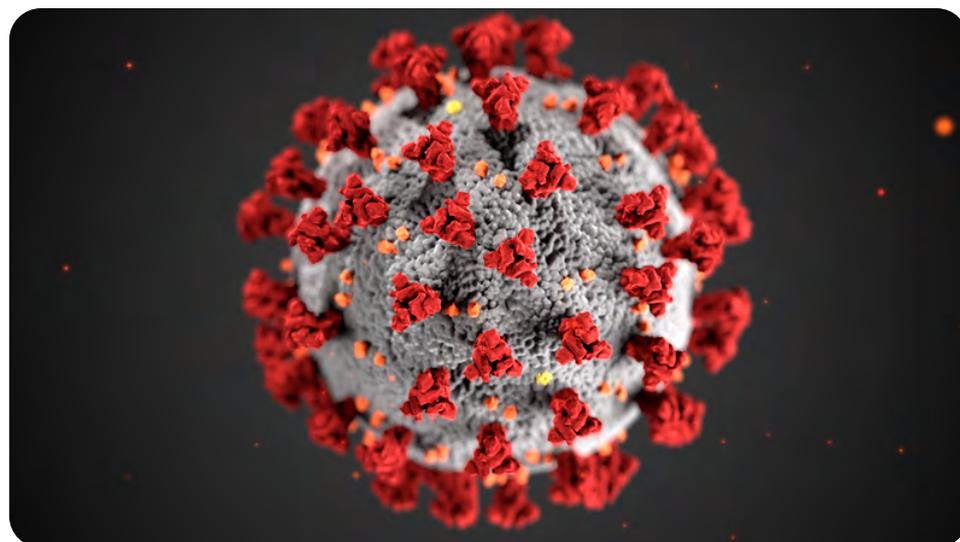


FRESH BITES NEWSLETTER

March 2020

Featured: COVID-19 Special Edition



We know that you and many others at your district/school are actively planning for the potential that the coronavirus (COVID-19) reaches your community. We've set aside our regular monthly newsletter to bring you tips and resources from a variety of sources to help you manage during this pandemic. **We're also offering a USDA-compliant COVID-19 Emergency Menu free to any school/district in the country. It's available at: MenuFreedom.com/COVID-19.**

This is a rapidly evolving situation with guidance from various government sources coming out frequently. We will continually monitor communications and issue updates as needed. Of course, official sources are always your first and best bet in this time of uncertainty.

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Free to ALL schools/districts: COVID-19 Emergency Menu

To help schools in the event of closing, NutriStudents K-12 is making publicly available – free to all – a COVID-19 Emergency Menu. It includes 3 weeks (5 days each) of fully compliant menu options. The 2 weeks of hot and 1 week of cold meals will accommodate both cafeteria-served meals or grab-and-go. Because the nutritional guidelines during this time of emergency are based on individual days versus full weeks, you can pick and choose any of the 15 meals you prefer, in any order. This is free to any child nutrition program in the entire country. Please download these menu days and share the link – MenuFreedom.com/COVID-19 with other school nutrition professionals you know.

Hot Meals

				
BBQ Baked Pork	Bosco Sticks	Cheeseburger	Chicken Enchilada Nachos	Pepperoni Pizza
				
Walking Beef Taco	Cheesy Spaghetti	Sesame Popcorn Chicken	Corn Dog	Chicken Patty Sandwich

Cold Meals

				
Ham Sandwich	Turkey Sandwich	Pastrami Sandwich	Asian Chicken Wrap	Craisin Chicken Wrap

Modifying Daily Foodservice Practices for COVID-19

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control has issued [sound guidance for schools](#) to employ, including details on [deep-cleaning procedures](#), to help contain the disease. Other measures your district may want employ include:

1. Regular hand-washing breaks during the day. [Watch \(and share with students\) the World Health Organization's video on proper hand-washing technique.](#)
2. Placing hand-sanitizing stations throughout the building and especially near every entrance to the cafeteria.
3. Stepping up your everyday food safety and sanitation procedures in the kitchen and cafeteria. The National Association for the Education of Young Children offers [this detailed chart](#) for the recommended cleaning frequency of various common surfaces and items in schools and child care facilities.
4. [Eliminating buffet/self-service bars](#) in favor of prepackaged breakfast and lunch items to minimize contamination and food handling.

Meal Continuation During Closures

Public health officials are currently recommending social distancing and limiting large-scale gatherings that may be extra-curricular. Official recommendations are fast-changing though. Please check [Coronavirus.gov](#) or your state's Department of Health regularly for the latest guidance.

If your district is to close, the USDA has made provisions to continue to feed low-income scholars. For any COVID-19 related closing through June 30, 2020, districts in low-income areas can offer food under the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) guidelines. In states where DOEs have applied for and received a waiver, schools that have in turn applied for a waiver from their DOE do not need to serve meals in a group setting. As of March 12, those states include: Washington, California, Maryland, Alaska, Utah, Pennsylvania, Wyoming, Maine and Kansas. Congress is working to pass a bill that would lift the need for states and schools to apply for waivers.

If there are other program guidelines that are not feasible for your district, you may apply for a waiver of statutory or regulatory program requirements for the child nutrition programs (CNPs) [here](#).

U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue announced proactive flexibilities to allow meal service during school closures to minimize potential exposure to the coronavirus. You may click [HERE](#) to watch Secretary Perdue discuss the proactive flexibilities at a U.S. House Appropriations hearing.

Read the [USDA Policy Memo](#) and [FAQs](#) on school meals and COVID-19.

How to Talk to Kids about COVID-19

Seattle is one metro area that has experienced a wide-spread outbreak of COVID-19. Widespread cancellation of school, public gatherings and businesses have been put in place to help contain the spread of the disease. To help address the questions teachers and parents are receiving from confused young people, the Seattle Intelligencer newspaper ran [this article](#) with references and resources your teachers and parents may find helpful.

The New York Times is making its content related to the coronavirus available publicly for free. Check out its collection “[Coronavirus Resources: Teaching, Learning and Thinking Critically](#),” published as part of its Learning Network, that help teachers and students to stay updated on the situation, think critically about information being shared and continue learning if school closes.

One additional story: “[Talking to kids about virus? Experts say be calm and honest](#),” from the Star Tribune in Minneapolis.

COVID-19 School and Foodservice-Related News Stories

- [How US schools are preparing for the coronavirus](#)
- [One district ends buffet-style meals in cafeteria as coronavirus precaution](#)
- [District offers drive-thru meal service during coronavirus closure](#)
- [Utah prepares to keep providing meals to students in need if coronavirus causes school closures](#)
- [As coronavirus closes schools, USDA offers limited help to kids who rely on school meals](#)
- [Coronavirus closures raise concern for kids who rely on schools for food; Details of USDA support aren't simple](#)
- [Preparing for the impacts of the coronavirus on health, well-being, and food security](#)
- [Does closing schools slow the spread of coronavirus? Past outbreaks provide clues](#)
- [Seattle Public Schools first major school system to close due to coronavirus](#)
- [Shut down by coronavirus, schools scramble to feed students](#)
- [School meal assistance proposals in House coronavirus response act](#)
- [Secretary Perdue statement on President Trump's address to the nation regarding COVID-19](#)

UPCOMING WEBINAR for Minnesota Schools

For schools/districts in Minnesota, join in the [Minnesota Department of Education's webinar "School Nutrition and COVID-19"](#) on Tuesday, March 17 at 2 p.m. CT.

Get In Touch!
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