

OCEANIC GLOBAL COVID-19 FACT SHEET

Information about COVID-19 is highly variable and still being uncovered. Here, we share a literature review of the most recent knowledge from leading global authorities, research institutes, and experts.

THE CURRENT SITUATION

In the wake of COVID-19, we have seen an **increased demand in plastic**, rollbacks of legislation banning plastics, and **disturbing statements from the plastic industry**. Plastic lobbyists are taking advantage of the fear induced by the COVID-19 pandemic to push their plastics agenda even when single-use plastic items are not necessarily the most hygienic choice.

Consumer demand for plastics is increasing. The International Solid Waste Association (ISWA) has estimated that **single-use plastics have increased between 250-300 percent since COVID-19 pandemic began** ([The Economist](#)). In response to COVID-19, there is monthly global consumption of **129 billion face masks and 65 billion gloves** ([Prata et al., 2020](#)). All of the masks manufactured to-date combined with those projected to be produced, would cover the entire landmass of Switzerland ([Scientific American](#)). From PPE, packaging, and single-use items used for food delivery and distribution, 2020 is on track to see a **30% increase in waste production from 2019** ([Prata et al., 2020](#)).

In addition to plastic consumption, COVID-19 is a reminder that **human health and environmental health are interlinked**, and marginalized communities are disproportionately bearing the brunt of the impacts. **Studies have now shown** that long-term exposure to air pollution increases risk of mortality from COVID-19 which is an example of how human health is reliant on environmental health.

Even in the face of a global recession and pandemic, consumer demand for businesses to demonstrate sustainable practices and planetary stewardship has only increased. People want to support businesses that embody their beliefs and are willing to pay more.

- In a recent study surveying 7,000 adults across Australia, France, Mexico, Singapore, Spain, the United Kingdom and the United States, Brandwatch found that **57% of respondents want businesses to focus on sustainability and the environment more in 2021** ([Sourcing Journal](#)).
- A recent Morgan Stanley meta-analysis shows that **88% of studies found that companies abiding by social or environmental standards showed higher operational performance** ([Morgan Stanley](#)).
- Three in four Millennials (74%) and Generation Z consumers (72%) are **willing to pay more for sustainable products and services** ([Nielsen](#)).
- A 2017 Unilever study shows that a third of consumers prefer sustainable brands, an estimated **\$1.1 trillion opportunity exists for brands** that make their sustainability credentials clear, and these numbers have only increased ([Unilever](#)).

HOW DOES COVID-19 SPREAD? ARE REUSABLES SAFE?

- A **statement** signed by over 125 virologists, epidemiologists, and health experts from 18 different countries endorses that reusables are safe.
 - “Based on the best available science and guidance from public health professionals, it is clear that reusable systems can be used safely by employing basic hygiene.”
 - “Single-use plastic is not inherently safer than reusables, and causes additional public health concerns once it is discarded.”
 - “Dishwashers and washing machines should be effective if operated according to manufacturers’ instructions and, in the case of laundry, using the warmest appropriate water setting for the items and drying”
- Revised **CDC guidelines** show that, “The virus is thought to spread mainly from person-to-person...between people who are in close contact with one another, through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs, sneezes, or talks.”
 - The transmission of these droplets occurs when a person is within 1-1.5 meters from a contagious individual and is at risk that their mouth or nose could be exposed to the droplets ([Martellucci et al., 2020](#)).
- The **CDC** states that transmission of the virus from surface contact has never been documented.
- **WHO Guidance for Food Businesses** & **WHO Guidance for the Accommodation Sector** makes no recommendation to use disposable items other than cleaning products.
- **FDA Best Practices for Food Retail Stores, Restaurants** include guidelines on ware-washing machines and cleaning protocols for reusable dishware.
- A **UK Food Standards Agency** study shows that there is currently no evidence that food or food packaging is a source or vehicle of transmission for the COVID-19 virus.
- Additional information on the safety of reusables [HERE](#) (Source: Upstream), [HERE](#) (Source: Surfrider), [HERE](#) (Source: Post-Landfill Action Network), and [HERE](#) (Source: Grist).
- According to current evidence, the virus is mainly transmitted through respiratory droplets from infected people. The transmission of these droplets occurs when a person is within 1-1.5 meters from a contagious individual and is at risk that their mouth or nose could be exposed to the droplets. ([Martellucci et al., 2020](#))

HOW LONG DOES COVID-19 LIVE ON VARIOUS SURFACES?

- **Tissue Paper:** 3 hours ([Chin et al., 2020](#))
- **Copper:** 4-5 hours ([Doremalen et al., 2020](#)), ([Warnes et al., 2015](#))
- **Cardboard:** 24 hours ([Doremalen et al., 2020](#))
- **Wood:** 2-4 days ([Carraturo et al., 2020](#)), ([Chin et al., 2020](#))
- **Glass:** 2-5 days ([Carraturo et al., 2020](#)), ([Chin et al., 2020](#))
- **Paper:** 5 days ([Carraturo et al., 2020](#))
- **Ceramic:** 5 days ([Carraturo et al., 2020](#))
- **Metal:** 2-7 days ([Doremalen et al., 2020](#)), ([Carraturo et al., 2020](#)), ([Chin et al., 2020](#))
- **Plastic:** 3-7 days ([Doremalen et al., 2020](#)), ([Carraturo et al., 2020](#)), ([Chin et al., 2020](#))

WHAT WILL PREVENT THE SPREAD OF COVID-19?

- Coronaviruses can be effectively inactivated on a surface as soon as within 1 minute of using standard disinfectant procedures. ([Chin et al., 2020](#))
 - Food-contact approved disinfectants containing 62-71% ethanol, 0.5% hydrogen peroxide or 0.1% sodium hypochlorite have been shown to work. ([Kampf et al., 2020](#))
- CDC guidelines on cleaning and disinfecting available [HERE](#).
- High-quality reusable masks with replaceable filters can be even more effective than N-95 masks.
 - [Castegrade](#) reusable masks use a replaceable 4-ply filter that has been tested to block microparticles at over 95% efficacy. Order with the purchasing code '**OG10**' for a **10% discount**.
 - [Reef Shield Flip](#) offers a plastic-free and reusable face shield option.
 - [SEEUS95](#) is a deaf-friendly reusable face covering option.

Dishwashing Guidance

Instead of switching to single-use or disposable options, choose reusables, which are actually a cleaner and safer choice. Below is guidance on authorized cleaning protocols to kill the COVID-19 virus.

- **WHO:** World Health Organization data shows that temperatures of 140°F - 150°F / 60°C - 66°C will kill most viruses.
- **FDA:** Warewasher should be clean, functioning, equipped with detergent and sanitizer. A single temperature machine should be at 165°F / 74°C, others should reach a high rinse temperature of 180°F / 82°C.
- Coronaviruses are susceptible to traditional heat treatments, such as cooking at 158°F / 70°C (Carraturo et al., 2020).

Country Examples:

- ★ **Switzerland:** Dishes and utensils (even unused) are washed in the dishwasher if possible (and not by hand). The washing programs are carried out at a temperature above 140°F / 60°C.
- ★ **Germany:** Dishes and utensils used by guests must be washed with a suitable cleaning agent at a temperature of at least 140°F / 60°C. If it is not possible to clean glasses in a dishwasher at 140°F / 60°C or higher, hot water with a temperature of at least 113°F / 45°C and detergent should be used in manual washing processes.
- ★ **Coronaviruses are susceptible to traditional heat treatments, such as cooking at 158°F / 70°C (Carraturo et al., 2020).**

GLOBAL REGULATIONS IN RESPONSE TO COVID-19

Sample of global regulations [HERE](#).

Tracker on U.S. state regulations [HERE](#) (Source: KFF) and [HERE](#) (Source: Post-Landfill Action Network).

Summary:

- In both the U.S. and globally, there is a focus on hygiene practices, including increased sanitization of high-touch areas and increased handwashing for employees. Tables and chairs must be sanitized after every usage.
- There is no strict guidance on using disposable dishware instead of reusables.
 - If using reusable utensils and dishware, it is recommended that they are washed in a dishwasher (warewasher). If not feasible, hand washing guidelines are in place to ensure sanitization.
 - However, it is often suggested that condiments and similar shared items be single-use. If not feasible, shared items must be properly disinfected after every usage.
 - Use of disposable or touchless menus is recommended or enforced, based on location.
 - In many places, utensils are required to be rolled or packaged.

Key Findings:

- ★ The CDC is the only major institution we came across that suggested using single-use foodservice items at any point.
- ★ The [Singapore Government](#) strongly encouraged that consumers bring their own clean and reusable containers when buying food.
- ★ In Australia, the [Victorian Government](#) shared, “There is currently no evidence to suggest there is any benefit in switching to disposables. It is important that the measures we take to minimize transmission are effective. The most effective measures you can take are practicing good hand hygiene and cleaning, with particular focus on shared, frequently touched surfaces.”
- ★ [Food Standards Scotland](#) reopening guidance for foodservice states that “there is currently no evidence that food or food packaging is a source or vehicle of transmission for the COVID-19 virus.”
- ★ The [Irish Food Safety Authority](#) has updated their website to indicate there is “no ban” on reusables.
- ★ States across the U.S. are allowing the use of reusable bags again.

FURTHER INFORMATION

- WHO - www.who.int/health-topics/coronavirus
- WHO Myth Busters - www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public/myth-busters
- CDC - www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/index.html
- NIH - <https://www.nih.gov/coronavirus>
- EPA - content.govdelivery.com/accounts/USAEPAPPT/bulletins/278c716
- Springer Nature Free COVID-19 Library - <https://www.springernature.com/gp/librarians/landing/covid19-library-resources>

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