

This guideline has been reviewed and adjusted to reflect Southern Health-Santé Sud protocols and policies.

COVID-19 Provincial Management of Food and Beverages In Health Care Environments

The following guidelines have been developed to support the safe management of food and beverages in health care facilities while reducing the risk of droplet/contact transmission of COVID-19.

External Food Deliveries For Staff

To ensure the health and safety of patients, clients, residents and staff in health care facilities throughout the province, food deliveries will be permitted but must follow Infection Prevention and Control Guidance.

These guidelines apply to individual food deliveries and corporate or restaurant donations for staff, and food brought in by staff.

1. Packaged food must allow for cleaning/disinfection upon arrival (e.g. plastic container). No cardboard boxes or Styrofoam will be permitted. Staff should call ahead to the external food provider to confirm packaging complies with IP&C requirements.
 - Single serving beverages allowed (i.e., coffee/tea, pop).
2. Food deliveries should be placed at the entrance and social distancing must be maintained at the hand off.
3. Prior to receipt of delivery, staff must perform hand hygiene.
4. Staff should remove food from outer transport container/warmer/bag (dispose or return to the delivery person as appropriate) AND wipe the exterior transport container with a site-approved disinfectant wipe (every effort must be made to ensure food inside the container is not exposed to the chemicals during the enhanced cleaning protocol).
5. Allow the container to air dry.
6. Perform hand hygiene following cleaning of the container.
7. Move container to an appropriate area for consumption (normal restrictions regarding food and beverage consumption in specific work areas continue to apply).
8. Ensure hand hygiene is performed prior to and after eating.

Guidance for Health Care Workers

Staff please NOTE the following guidelines for all health care environments (clinical care and non-clinical care sites):

In addition to normal restrictions regarding the consumption of food and beverages in specific work areas, the following requirements are now in place:

1. Social distancing protocols must be practiced in all meeting rooms, staff lounges and lunch room areas:
 - Place signs with suggested maximum persons per room
 - Wherever possible, decrease seating in these areas to adhere to appropriate distancing
 - Follow proper hand hygiene protocols and disinfect any surface you touch in common areas.
2. Hand hygiene should be followed if touching any shared utensils or condiments prior to eating.
3. Staff can continue to bring their own personal food and related supplies for their shift. Personal food can be stored in staff fridges and microwaves will continue to be available. Anything placed into a staff fridge should be wiped down; containers/lunch bags must be made of a material that can be disinfected, e.g. no paper.
4. Ice machines should be accessed by unit staff only.
5. High touch areas must be frequently cleaned/disinfected throughout the day.

Guidance for Patients/Residents/Clients

All unit kitchenettes should have clear cleaning/disinfection processes for staff. All kitchenettes are closed to direct patient, resident and client access.

Hand hygiene must be followed as per routine practices prior to retrieving the ward stock/snack.