

FOOD TAKEOUT AND DELIVERY During a Public Health Emergency



BACKGROUND

On Monday, March 16, 2020, Louisiana Gov. John Bel Edwards limited restaurants to only delivery, takeout or drive-through service to limit the spread of the new coronavirus that causes COVID-19. Since this decision, restaurants are relying on takeout, self-delivery and third-party delivery, such as Waitr and Uber Eats, to get food to their customers. Even though the new coronavirus is not a foodborne virus — which means it may not be transferred from food — the proven transmission routes are direct or indirect person-to-person contact. Therefore, there is a need for strict measures to minimize the risk of infection transmission during food delivery.

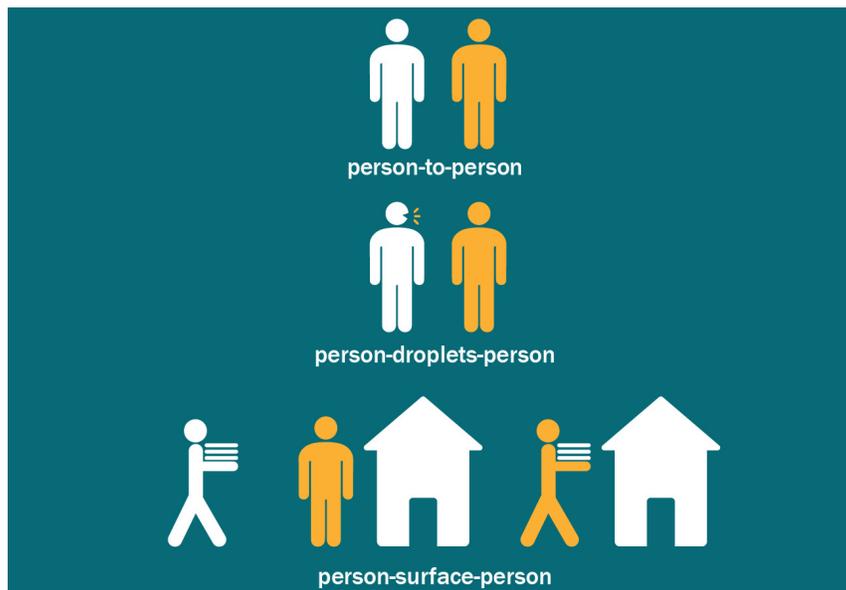


Fig. 1 The transmission routes of COVID-19.

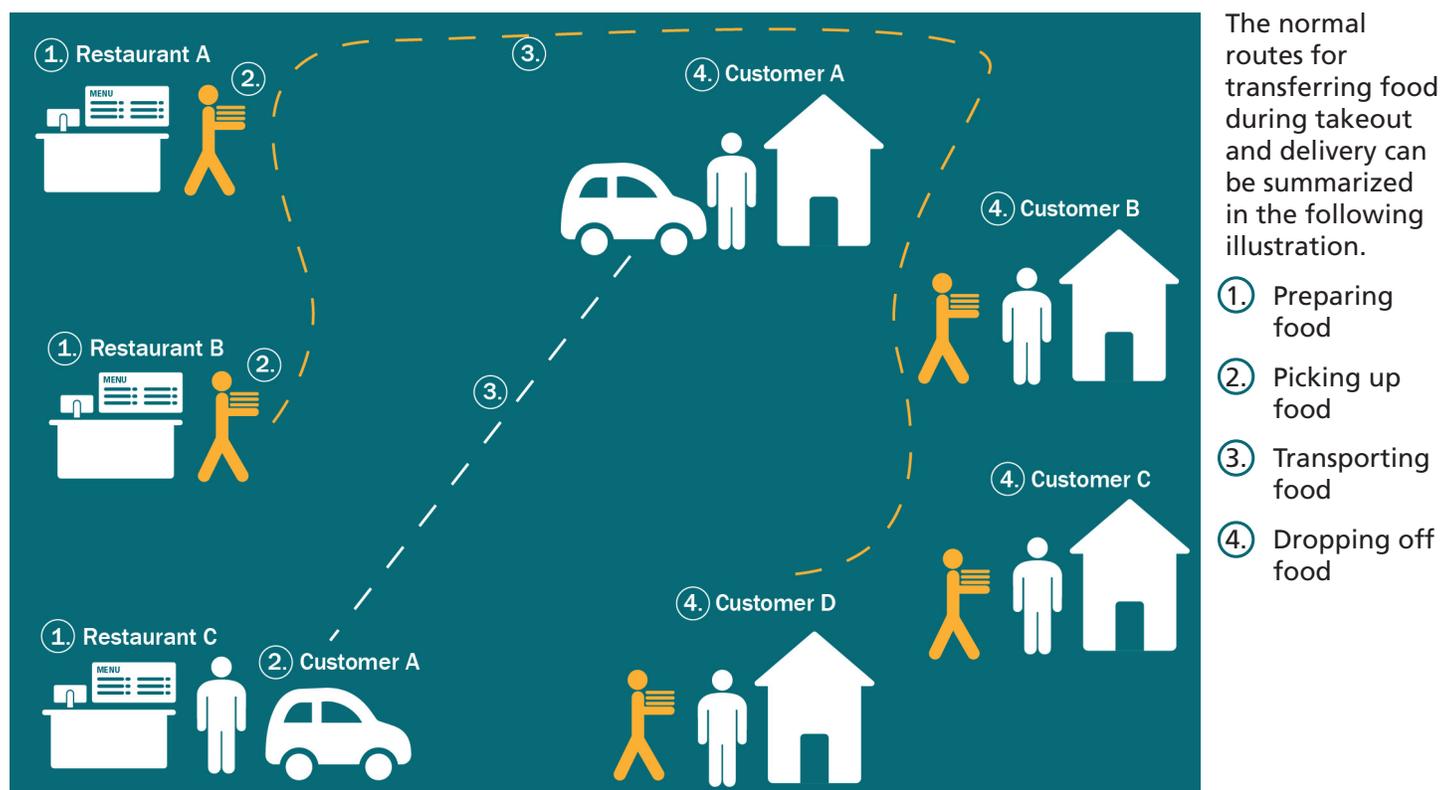


Fig. 2 A typical route taken during takeout and food delivery.

WHEN PREPARING FOOD

It is important to ensure that the people who are handling food are healthy. An employee temperature report is needed at the beginning of each shift. Any employee who is experiencing symptoms of COVID-19, such as fever, cough or shortness of breath, must be excluded from the establishment immediately. Standard sanitation operating procedures (SSOPs) need to be followed strictly.

When packing foods for delivery or takeout, minimize barehanded contact with food containers and delivery bags. Cover your mouth and nose when sneezing. Sneeze into your elbow or use a tissue. Change gloves afterward. Wash hands properly before putting on new gloves.

Clean and sanitize frequently touched surfaces such as the shelves and countertops for grab-n-go food items. Utensils need to be in a sealed package.

WHEN PICKING UP FOOD

All bags need to be clearly marked to reduce employee-to-customer or restaurant employee-to-delivery personnel contact. If communication is needed, both parties need to keep a safe distance of 6 feet, according to the Center of Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

WHEN TRANSPORTING FOOD

If customers pick up takeout food themselves and transport the food in their vehicles, they need to make sure that inside their vehicles are clean and sanitized. They should also put on hand sanitizer after placing food in the vehicle. Customers should sanitize the bags and thoroughly wash their hands when they get home.

If the food is delivered by a restaurant employee or through a third-party delivery system, the workers providing the delivery service should monitor their health conditions and refrain from providing the service if COVID-19 symptoms are detected. Make sure to clean and sanitize carrying bags between deliveries. Delivery workers should wash or sanitize their hands after picking up at each restaurant and after each delivery.

WHEN DROPPING OFF FOOD

Place the food bag on the front porch or tie it to the door handle to minimize person-to-person contact. If communication is needed, both parties need to keep a safe distance of 6 feet. Customers need to spray the bags after pickup from the porch and wash their hands thoroughly before removing food from the bag. Workers who delivered the food need to wash and/or sanitize their hands after each drop-off.

REFERENCES

[The Advocate. 2019. Louisiana steps up restrictions on bars, gyms; state warns people will die as coronavirus spreads.](#)

[Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\). 2019. Coronavirus.](#)

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