



FOOD HANDLING IN OUR COMMUNITY KITCHENS

Examples of how different communities are adapting to change:

For taking home food, our ladies are split into 3 groups - the first is the young moms, then the rest are split into 2 other groups. The cooks call us over by group number, ask people to touch only their own utensils (which they've put out for easier access), practice distancing, etc. It's actually very efficient. I'm in and out within 5 minutes and with so few people in the kitchen at one time, physical distancing is much easier.

We are cooking quite a few simpler meals. This means less stress for the cooks and less work/time to take food home.

Cooks prepare the meals and set everything out on the buffet line. We have assigned the 4 youngest members of the dishwashing crew to serve up the food into the take home containers. In this way only one person touches any one utensil getting used, and helps prevent the spread of the virus.

For dishwashing, only half-crew is required - the regular crew splits duties per day. Meals are prepared for Mittog everyday, take-home supper three times per week.

Each family gets a phone call from the cooks when it's time to go for food. We were placed into small groups (3 or 4) of extended families. Groups are rotated for fairness.

We serve Mittog only. Our head cook sets out whatever we need for Family supper so it can be taken home at Mittog as well. Family breakfast daily.

In our community we have families who have vulnerable members living with chronic illness. They requested to go to the kitchen first. Head cook agreed.

Last week we made several different varieties of perogies to have ready frozen, ahead of time for future use. Our ladies split into groups, making sure to practise physical distancing. We also used multiple rooms to ensure we followed the ten person limits as well.

Our women established a firm rule of not allowing food to be brought back to the kitchen, for hygienic reasons, not spreading germs, and also to discourage taking home more than can be consumed.

The cooks post the meals of the day ahead of time, so people know which dishes to bring. That speeds things up.

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Meal Preparation

This bulletin presents ideas and suggestions for implementing changes to our meal preparation process to prevent to spread of COVID-19. We hope you find these tips helpful and, if you have further suggestions that emerge from your experience, please let us know.

Preparing food at home is the safest option because it supports family quarantine and physical distancing. This slows down the rate at which the virus can move from person to person within our communities. Note: if meals are still being prepared by the community kitchen, food must be taken home.

Food Handling Recommendations

1. Wash your hands AFTER entering the kitchen. Soap and water OR hand sanitizer (70% alcohol) are both good options.
2. Even if all meals are prepared at home, most food ingredients are taken from communal food containers. It is therefore essential to clean and disinfect them at least once daily.
3. Assume communal containers for flour, sugar, spices, salad dressing, etc. are contaminated, and wash hands before and after touching them. Avoid coming into contact with the ingredients to keep the food safe.
4. After filling your own container, assume that it might be contaminated, and wash your container thoroughly with soap and water. Wash your hands after washing your container.
5. If food is distributed from the kitchen, the safest option is to have a food server ladle food into the take-home dishes. This is the easiest way to limit the hand contact per utensil to ONE person, minimizing the risk of transmission.
6. Put all multiple-use cloth towels used for drying hands into storage and replace them with paper towels or napkins that are used once and then thrown out. Air-drying is also a safe option.

To prevent the spread of the virus, we never allow multiple people to use a serving utensil when dishing out food to take home. One utensil per person, always. We have a tray at the head of the table with sanitized utensils. After a family's food has been taken, the used utensil is placed in the "dirty" tray to be sanitized before the next person uses it. We have a dishwasher, but it works just as well to place used utensils into the community sink.

Guidelines for establishing new routines

- This is a stressful time for those preparing food. It is important that all community members provide support and encouragement.
- As needed, extra help should be assigned because of the extra work disinfection requires.
- These are especially challenging times for head cooks. They must manage their own stress and also deal with many other community members who are also dealing with more stress than usual. Show your appreciation—from a safe distance, of course.
- It is a big change for Hutterites to eat at home. For most, food preparation has unexpectedly become a major part of daily life. This is more work, especially for parents who have to establish new routines for how to share the food prep and cleanup with teenagers and children in the home.
- If you have suggestions for your head cook or weekly cooks on how to do things more efficiently, consider the best time to communicate your thoughts. For example, when the cooks are on the job, juggling three different tasks, is probably not the best time to suggest changes. One-on-one conversations are best.



Any questions or concerns please contact HSC directly at: hbcovid19@hbsafe.farm

