



Can reusable grocery bags spread COVID-19?

According to the CDC, touching a surface that may have the virus on it is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads. Potential exposure to COVID-19 from handling reusable grocery bags is low, but here are several recommendations to help address industry and customer concerns:

For Shoppers:

- Shopping bags should be washed after every use when carrying food just as you would launder a kitchen towel. Canvas or cloth bags can be laundered in the washer following manufacturer instructions. The inside of plastic-lined bags should be scrubbed using hot water and soap.
- For all types of grocery shopping bags, remove any inserts (many are cardboard), turn each bag inside out before washing, and pay special attention to the nooks and crannies around the seams. Clean any inserts with a disinfecting spray cleaner.

For Retailers:

- Encourage customer self-bagging when reusable shopping bags are used.
- Discourage the placement of reusable grocery bags on conveyor belts or provide a disinfectant that may be used frequently on conveyor belts.
- Disinfect conveyor belts and shopping carts: <https://oda.fyi/DisinfectantsCOVID19>
- Provide single use bags (paper or plastic, where appropriate) for clerks to use while bagging customer groceries.
- Provide alcohol-based hand antiseptic rubs (with at least 60% ethyl alcohol as the active ingredient) for clerks.
- Ensure all employees wash their hands frequently and thoroughly with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Consider installing temporary hand washing stations for clerks.
- Remind employees to avoid touching eyes, nose, and mouth to help slow the spread of germs.