

Restaurant best practices in light of the COVID-19 outbreak

Communicate with guests

- Confirm reservations to reduce cancellations and no-shows
- Customise and resend booking confirmation emails and include a note about the precautions your team is taking
- Encourage any pre-booked private dining groups to reschedule
- Use email and social media to let potential guests know what steps you're taking to ensure their safety
- Update your website to include precautions you're taking, as well as any changes to hours or service, including if you've temporarily closed
- Encourage sick guests to stay home by posting a note on your website and adding to your phone recording: "If you traveled overseas, are experiencing symptoms, or have been in contact with someone with the virus, please consider joining us another time."
- Monitor social media and other channels and respond to any outreach from guests
- Encourage people to buy gift cards for future use

Keep things even cleaner

- Put hand sanitiser in prominent places at the entrance of your restaurant and ensure they are regularly refilled
- Increase mandatory handwashing of staff through the shift or anytime they change their job task, use the restroom, clean, or handle cash
- Use Australian Food safety recommended, hospital-grade disinfectant and cleaners
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands
- Regularly clean and disinfect objects and surfaces that have been touched (counters, doorknobs, toilets, phones, etc.)
- Clean tables, handles, and bathrooms more frequently and thoroughly
- Use silverware roll-ups so there is less handling of clean silverware during service. Never touch the areas of silverware or glassware that will touch guests' mouths
- If you have to cough or sneeze, try your best to do it off the floor and properly cover your mouth with a tissue or cough into your elbow
- Remove salt shakers, pepper mills, and other shared condiments from tables
- Create distance between tables—1 person per 4 square metres of space (ie. 25 people in a 100-square-metre venue)
- Create a QR code that links to a digital menu to reduce the need for a physical menu

Engage your staff

- Ask sick staff members to stay home
- Check with staff at the beginning of each shift to make sure they are well
- Brief your staff that if COVID-19 starts spreading in your community anyone with even a mild cough or low-grade fever needs to stay at home
- Keep an on-call program to help staff get extra shifts when you lose anyone to illness or see a pickup in the books
- Remind your staff to practice proper hygiene before they come to work, including trimming fingernails, wearing clean clothes, and leaving jewelry at home
- Communicate with staff regularly about what might be coming and be as transparent with them as possible
- Enforce that if a member has been in contact with anyone that has displayed symptoms, to adhere to health protocols
- Share your communication plan and talking points for when guests have questions about what the restaurant is doing to keep guests and employees safe

Lean into what works in the moment

- Offer delivery or take-out if you don't already, and consider adding more delivery items
- Consider a no-touch or drive-through pick-up option
- Limit spending: buy only what you need to operate and put capital expenses on hold
- Change any dishes designed to share or served family-style to single portions
- Be empathetic to guest preferences, whether that's accommodating seating requests, a new glass, or anything else that will make them more comfortable

Prepare for the future

- Stay informed about city-wide and federal government restrictions
- Implement plans to continue business-as-usual in case you experience higher than usual staff absences
- Cross-train staff to perform essential functions in case key staff members are absent
- If you have more than one location, encourage local managers to take any locale-specific precautions



For more resources, visit

<http://restaurant.opentable.com.au/learn/preparedness-resource-centre>