

# COVID-19: Be Prepared for a Second Wave

A checklist for food and nutrition services in healthcare and senior living settings



As hospitals, senior living communities, long-term care homes and community-based meal programs plan for a resurgence or a second wave of COVID-19, or any infectious disease outbreak, these should be primary areas of focus:

- ▶ **INFECTION CONTROL PROTOCOLS**
- ▶ **STAFFING AND EMPLOYEE SAFETY**
- ▶ **MENU PLAN**
- ▶ **OPERATIONS**
  - **Back-of-house procedures**
  - **Communal dining**
  - **In-room dining**
  - **Retail**
  - **Catering**

*Use this planning checklist to prepare for an occurrence of an infectious disease in your community.*

## INFECTION CONTROL PROTOCOLS

- Keep informed on your organization's policies and the provincial and federal best practices for managing specific infectious disease.
- Perform infection control self-audits to uncover areas in need of improvement.
- Define and train on policies and procedures (P&P) for standard and transmission-based precautions, including:
  - Personal protection equipment (PPE) policy for food and nutrition services staff
  - Meal ordering and delivery policy for isolation and non-isolation rooms
  - Use of regular or disposable dishware and eating utensils
  - Special handling for meal trays in isolation rooms
  - Cleaning/sanitizing/disinfecting of meal delivery carts
- Create a communication plan to reinforce standard and transmission-based precautions, including staff training and posting signs.
- Forecast demand and confirm supply for hand sanitizer, cleaning chemicals and PPE.
- Streamline the number of vendors to limit infection exposure.
- Define phased restrictions for vendor and supply delivery policies. Review with prime vendors:
  - Dedicated entry door for screening
  - Designated area for back-door delivery unloading, if necessary
  - If using back-door delivery, designate a team member to contact once the order arrives at the location

## STAFFING AND EMPLOYEE SAFETY

- Develop a plan for staffing shortage.
- Develop a consistent staffing plan to reduce exposure of your team members to patients/residents.
- Create a schedule to manage physical distancing during employee breaks.
- Develop a plan to aid in physical distancing of employees in back-of-house.
- Reinforce P&P for:
  - Screening employees
  - Signs and symptoms that must be reported to a supervisor
  - When to stay at home if sick
  - Personal hygiene
  - PPE while at work
- Document any emergency duties in job descriptions.
- Plan for designated employees as leaders in key areas like cleaning, hand-washing and social distancing.
- Determine an employee communication plan for consistent messaging of up-to-date information:
  - Designate an area for information boards
  - Schedule daily huddles/check-ins
  - Collaborate with your marketing team to ensure appropriate use of logo on all safety signs
  - Include communication from key stakeholders such as infection prevention and nursing leaders

## MENU PLAN

- Design alternative patient/resident and retail menus for safe physical distancing and potential disruption in staffing levels or supply issues:
  - Menu A:** Streamlined variety while still offering a reasonable choice
  - Menu B:** Grab-and-go menu/delivery-only menu
  - Menu C:** Convenience menu for severe staffing shortage
- Adjust or eliminate “cook-to-order” and “self-service” options.
- Adjust recipe yields and production counts based on forecast scenarios.
- Adjust order quantities for menus based on forecast scenarios.
- Be prepared to adjust menus depending on product availability.

## OPERATIONS: BACK-OF-HOUSE

- Document P&P for heightened infection control protocols, including when to implement them. This includes increased frequency of:
  - Sanitizing/disinfecting high-touch areas
  - Checking warewashing chemicals and temperatures
  - Handwashing
- Document P&P for restrictions of who is allowed in the kitchen.
- Identify the need, then source for mobile hand-washing or sanitizer stations.
- Assure availability of supplies and equipment, such as room trays and delivery carts.

## OPERATIONS: COMMUNAL DINING

- Determine a meal delivery plan if communal dining must close down.
- Develop dining room layout for physical distancing:
  - Remove tables/chairs or mark for non-use
  - Designate storage area if tables/chairs are to be removed

## OPERATIONS: COMMUNAL DINING *(continued)*

- Create P&P for heightened sanitizing/disinfection, when indicated.
- Create P&P for screening people eating in the dining room when indicated.
- Have a source for signage for physical distancing and hand-washing reminders.
- Identify the need and have a source for mobile hand-washing or sanitizer stations.
- Develop a seating or reservation process that allows you to serve the anticipated number of guests:
  - For long-term care (LTC), consider options that allow all residents to safely enjoy at least one meal a day in the dining room
- Finalize a sample table top setting to minimize the need for sanitizing between settings (i.e.: remove table tents, condiments, napkin dispensers, etc.).
- Designate a waiting room with ample space for physical distancing.
- Have a plan for disposable menus or a source for digital menus.
- Research reservation systems.

## OPERATIONS: IN-ROOM DINING FOR LTC

- Determine an in-room meal delivery schedule for times when communal dining is limited or not allowed.
- Plan ideas to encourage engagement with each resident, such as daily inspirational messages or comedy cards with meals.
- Plan sufficient support for residents who need assistance with eating.

## OPERATIONS: CATERING

- Plan menu options that are pre-portioned and wrapped for individual use.
- Forecast demand for to-go containers.
- Identify the need and source for mobile hand-washing or sanitizer stations.

## OPERATIONS: RETAIL

- Determine what retail outlets will be temporarily closed during the outbreak, and plan to adjust staffing needs.
- Rethink menu options and service style to influence reduced time in line for guests, keeping them apart when they are in line and getting them out of the retail space faster.
- Do an assessment of equipment needs and capacity.
- Research customer pre-order and pre-payment technology options if you don't already have them.
- Have a plan to minimize contact at payment:
  - Enact a policy for not accepting cash, when indicated
  - Have guests swipe their own cards
  - Have a source identified to supply plexiglas barriers
- Plan a designated order pickup area.
- Have a source for signage for physical distancing and hand-washing reminders.
- Research to-go containers and forecast demand.
- Develop a plan for a micro-market to offer meal kits and essential items for employees.
- Develop a delivery plan if you don't do it already.