

# 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>