

NEWS RELEASE

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Reusable Bags...How Safe Are They?

You've made the transition from paper or plastic grocery bags to reusable bags. You keep them in the trunk, so they are always available when you go shopping. Time for a pat on the back? Maybe. Do you ever wash those bags?

If you don't, you're not alone. Most people do not wash their reusable bags and may be contaminating some of their food. Studies have found bacteria, including Salmonella and E. coli, on some reusable shopping bags. At this time, we are all concerned with the Covid-19 virus. Shopping bags contaminated with Covid-19 is another way the virus can be spread. **Viruses and bacteria can survive in the tote bags up to several days!** Here are some tips to avoid cross-contamination:

- Reusable grocery bags should be machine or hand washed frequently! Dry the bags in a clothes dryer or allow them to air dry.
- Put raw meats in clear plastic bags (often supplied by the grocery store) to prevent juices from leaking and contaminating other food items, and the reusable grocery bags.
- Keep raw meats, fresh produce, and ready-to-eat foods in separate bags.
- Store reusable bags at home instead of the car. Higher temperatures, especially in the summer, promote bacteria growth in and on the bags.

Make a plan to wash your reusable bags regularly. This way, you can reduce your risk of foodborne illness and help the environment at the same time. For more food safety information, visit www.foodsafety.gov.

For answers to the question, "How long can the virus that causes Covid-19 live on surfaces?", visit <https://hub.jhu.edu/2020/03/20/sars-cov-2-survive-on-surfaces/>.

For more nutrition or program information, please call (530) 889-7350 or visit our website at <http://ucanr.edu/sites/letseathealthy>. "Like" us on Facebook for additional tips and updates at CalFresh Healthy Living, UCCE Placer/Nevada Counties.



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