



UMB Recovery | Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19)

UMB Guidance for Eating and Drinking Regarding COVID-19 Risk

August 16, 2021

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) states, *“Currently, there is no evidence to suggest that handling food or eating is associated with directly spreading COVID-19. However, people sharing utensils and congregating around food service areas can pose a risk. Limit food or beverage service in areas in which people are more likely to congregate as that may encourage unmasked interactions.”*

Therefore, the University of Maryland, Baltimore (UMB) asks that individuals consider the following when having food at events or elsewhere:

I. Unvaccinated Individuals

- a) At all times, unvaccinated individuals **MUST** be at least 6 feet from other individuals when their own mask is off to eat or drink

II. Fully Vaccinated Individuals

- a) Outdoor Eating
 - i. Outdoor eating is encouraged
 - ii. We encourage eating to take place alone or in small groups
 - iii. When group tables are incorporated, limit table size to no more than 10 people
- b) Indoor Eating
 - i. Eating should be prohibited during classroom sessions; drinking is permitted if a person returns to wearing their mask as soon as possible
 - ii. Individuals should avoid congregating and engaging in conversation with people in areas where eating and drinking take place (e.g. no meetings while eating)
 - iii. We encourage eating to take place alone or in small groups
 - iv. Encourage individuals to get their food and go to a location where they can physically distance at least 6 feet while eating (e.g. their office, open spaces in the building)

III. Food and Drinks at Events

- a) When holding an event that will provide food and beverages, consider a dedicated time and space to eat and drink from required portions of the event such as presentations or workshops to avoid conversations with unmasked people.
 - i. Staggered serving times to reduce crowding while eating is encouraged.
- b) Consider providing prepacked or grab-and-go food
- c) If food is served as a buffet, consider having dedicated servers
- d) Regardless of whether food is grab-and-go or served in a buffet, individuals must wear masks while getting their food
- e) Set up food and eating areas so as to encourage physical distancing and not to encourage individuals to congregate or mingle in groups larger than six people
- f) Do not allow food and drinks to be used as a reason to remove masks and socialize

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