

**If you have to go to the store, touch as little as possible and sanitize all the stuff you buy when you get home.**

Mr. Nelken noted that most produce is placed on displays by hand — sometimes they're gloved. But it's safe to assume that if a piece of produce has been out, it's been handled by at least 10 people.

He recommended misting produce with a very diluted bleach solution (a teaspoon of bleach per gallon of water) and letting it air dry. Or, if you're nervous about using bleach on something you'll eat, he said you could use a disinfecting wipe.

*[How [long will the virus last](#) on surfaces and the air?]*

Other goods are less risky, but it's still worth wiping down cardboard boxes of crackers or other packaged items.

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Mr. Nelken said one thing to watch out for is your reusable grocery bags: “When was the last time you sanitized your favorite bag?”

**Also, wash your hands and maybe wash your hair.**

Dr. Swartzberg underlined the advice you've been hearing from health officials: Hand soap really will protect you.

“One thing about this coronavirus,” he said, is that “it's very susceptible to disinfectants and soap and water.”

That said, if you go to a store, touch a contaminated surface, then touch your hair and then your face, even once between hand-washing, you could become infected.

So, he said, if you're really concerned, it might be worth throwing your clothes in the wash and showering after you get back from the store. (Your shoes, he

said, are probably fine to bring into the house.)

**Ultimately, though, the best thing to do is stay away from other people, particularly if you're part of a vulnerable population.**

Although state health officials [released guidelines](#) for grocery stores saying they should limit how many customers are in a given store and should keep people at least six feet apart even when they're in line, this is proving to be easier said than done.

[The Los Angeles Times reported](#) that seniors hoping to get into a Monrovia Trader Joe's during a special early-shopping period were greeted with confusion.

Both Dr. Swartzberg and Mr. Nelken said grocers would need to come up with more sustainable ways to update customers in real time.

"I think the first thing we need to avoid is just showing up," Mr. Nelken told me.

For now, he suggested calling the store you'd like to visit before you leave, both to inquire about the wait and what's in stock.

Many grocery-store chains have said that they're hiring up and cleaning more frequently, and that they still have curbside pickup and delivery available, [even if their systems are moving more slowly](#).

*[Find the [latest updates on the coronavirus pandemic here](#).]*