Can Covid-19 spread through frozen food or food packaging?

Experts say risk of such transmission is low, but practising good personal hygiene still key

Cheryl Tan

Sporadic researchers studying longevity of virus

An ongoing study by local re-
searchers found that the Sars-
CoV-2 virus, which causes Covid-19, could survive in suf-
ficiently high humidities — on
e frozen fish, chicken and pork for
three weeks at refrigeration tem-
peratures.

Co-led by Dr Danielle Andon-
son, scientific director of the
Duke-NUS Medical School’s
ARMS Laboratory, in collabora-
tion with Professor Dale Fisher
from the National University of
Singapore’s Yong Loo Lin
School of Medicine, the study
was conducted to test the “long-
term and infectivity of Sars-CoV-
2 in refrigerated and frozen food.”

High percentages of samples
used to infest pieces of salmon,
chicken and pork sourced from
local supermarkets.

The samples were stored at
different temperatures; 4 deg C
(refrigeration tempera-
ture), minus 20 deg C (freezer
temperature) and minus 80 deg
C (deep freezer temperature) for
weeks.

Professor Fisher noted that the
virulence of the virus was con-
siderably reduced with time.

Dr Andonson said the results
were similar to those in other
studies, indicating that it is prob-
ably safe to eat frozen food,
though it is better to make sure
the food is fully cooked.

The Singapore Food Agency
ranks on its website that it is “not aware of any evidence” suggesting that the virus can be transferred to food via food packaging.

WHO says...

The World Health Organisation (WHO) has said there is unlikely for people to contract Covid-19 from frozen food or packaging.

There is no evidence that Covid-19 can be transmitted through frozen food packaging, and that transmission via contaminated food is not a major infection route.

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