

Russians Start Hoarding Food Over Coronavirus Fears

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Russian consumers have begun panic-buying non-perishable food products over fears of the coronavirus pandemic, the Vedomosti business daily has [reported](#).

A total of 20 coronavirus cases have been reported in Russia, most of whom had recently returned from Italy, since the Covid-19 outbreak began in neighboring China in December. Demand for surgical masks has surged after Russia reported its first coronavirus case in late January, leading Russia to [ban exports of the masks](#) last week.

Related article: [Russia Bans Export of Masks, Hazmat Suits to Fight Coronavirus](#)

Demand also rose sharply for household chemicals, soap and personal hygiene products in February, online stores told Vedomosti on Saturday.

Wildberries, one of Russia's largest online retailers, reported a 241% year-on-year increase in

the sales of wet wipes, 185% for regular wipes and 175% for toilet paper.

Goods.ru reported a fivefold increase in the sales of household chemicals and a fourfold increase for non-perishables and water, according to Vedomosti.

Another major online marketplace Utkonos reported a 67% sales increase of canned goods and a 55% sales increase in groceries including cereals and pasta.

Traditional retailers including Auchan, X5, Magnit and Lenta denied a buying boom and attributed their sales increases to public holidays observed in Russia. However, the retailers are reportedly preparing for a coronavirus-fueled buying spree with requests for additional deliveries from household chemical manufacturers.

Psychologists told Vedomosti that panic-buying creates the illusion of control for consumers and stems from fear of the unknown and mistrust of the state.

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