

# Hand Washing

## Introduction

Poor personal hygiene is a major contributing factor to food borne illness.

Many bacteria and viruses that cause food borne illnesses can be transferred by people to food. The bacteria and viruses can be carried on a foodservice worker's nose, hair, skin, and under the fingernails.

People that handle food can keep harmful bacteria and viruses from contaminating food by proper handwashing.

## Handwashing Procedures

Although washing hands seems easy, there is a proper way to wash hands to ensure clean results and keep food safe. Proper handwashing is a barrier to food contaminants and it is every employee's responsibility. Follow these simple recommended steps.

Step	Procedure
1	Wet hands and arms with hot (110°F) water.
2	Use an antibacterial soap and lather hands and arms.
3	Wash hands and arms thoroughly. A nail brush may be used to clean under the nails and between fingers.
4	Wash for about 20 seconds.
5	Rinse thoroughly under hot running water.
6	Dry hands with a disposable towel or a hot air dryer. Do not use kitchen utensil or cleaning towels.

## When to Wash Hands

Your own health comes first. Therefore, it is important to wash hands frequently and after any possibility of contamination. Always wash your hands.

- After using the toilet.
- After coughing, sneezing, eating, drinking, smoking, or touching your skin or hair.
- After handling soiled equipment or utensils.

- Immediately before starting any food preparation and after breaks.
- During food preparation as often as necessary to prevent contamination - especially when working with raw food and changing tasks.
- When you use plastic gloves, the same rules apply. Remember to wash hands before wearing gloves. Also wash hands and change gloves after breaks, touching raw foods, changing tasks, before handling ready to eat foods, etc.

## **Proper Handwash Facilities**

Maintain proper handwash facilities and set an example to encourage employees to practice good personal hygiene.

- Provide an accessible handwash sink with hot and cold running water. Do not use the sink to store kitchen items.
- Provide soap and towels, a nail brush, check dispensers on a regular basis, and keep extra supplies on hand.
- Post handwash signs to remind employees to wash hands frequently.
- Train employees in proper handwash techniques. Explain why handwashing is important to food safety. Monitor employees to ensure good personal hygiene practices.