

Handwashing Practices

Handwashing and enacting an effective employee health policy is the best strategy to prevent the spread of bacteria and viruses which cause foodborne illness. Employees can be a significant source of harmful microorganisms. Proper and frequent handwashing can be an effective tool to minimize contamination to food.

When to Wash Hands

- ✗ Before starting to work with food, utensils, or equipment.
- ✗ During food preparation and as necessary to remove contamination.
- ✗ After using the restroom. Wash hands in the restroom and again in the kitchen before returning to work.
- ✗ When switching between raw foods and ready-to-eat foods.
- ✗ After coughing, sneezing, using a handkerchief or disposable tissue, using tobacco, eating, or drinking.
- ✗ Before putting on gloves for working with food.
- ✗ Between changing tasks between food service and non food activities (ex. cleaning).
- ✗ After handling dirty equipment or utensils.
- ✗ After eating or following a break.

Proper Handwashing Steps

Handwashing must take place in a sink that is designated only for this purpose. Handwashing should not take place in utensil, food preparation or service sinks.

1. Wet hands under running water
2. Rub hands together using soap, *not a hand sanitizer*, to create a soapy lather that covers hands and forearms. Wash hands for at least 15 seconds.
3. Rinse thoroughly under running water.
4. Dry hands with a single-use paper towel, heated air device or air-knife system.