

FACT SHEET

PERSONAL HYGIENE

REQUIREMENTS FOR FOOD HANDLERS

A key way to help prevent food contamination is for food handlers to maintain a high standard of personal hygiene and cleanliness. Even the healthiest of people carry food poisoning bacteria on their bodies.

It's important that food handlers:

- thoroughly wash and dry hand regularly throughout the day
- avoid unnecessary contact with ready to eat foods, such as salads and cooked meats
- do whatever is reasonable to prevent their body - or anything they are wearing - coming into contact with food or food contact surfaces
- wear clean clothing and ensure all bandages or dressings are protected by a waterproof covering
- do not eat, smoke, sneeze, blow, cough or spit over unprotected work surfaces
- keep long hair tied back or covered and keep fingernails short and free from nail polish.

FOOD HANDLER HEALTH

Food handlers are required to notify their supervisor when they feel sick. They must not handle food if they are sick with vomiting, diarrhoea, gastro, fever, infected skin lesions or if they have discharge from their ears, nose or throat.

HAND WASHING

A number of infectious diseases can be spread from one person to another by contaminated hands, particularly gastrointestinal infections and hepatitis A. Unwashed or poorly washed hands are the most common way to transfer bacteria to food.

When to wash your hands

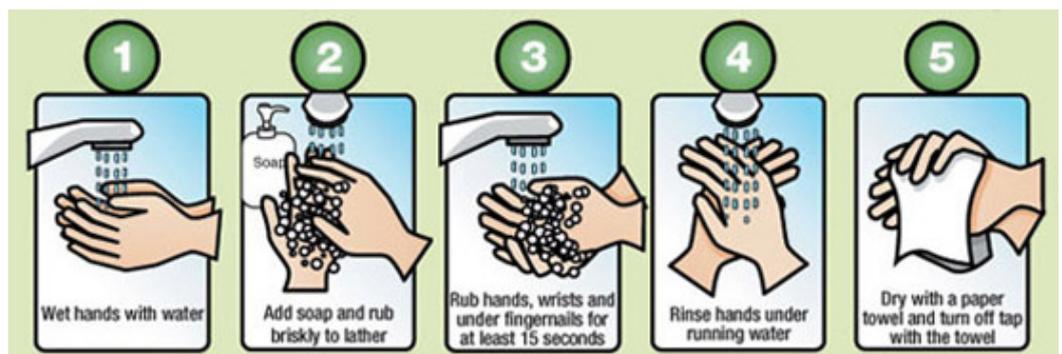
Hands should be washed thoroughly at regular intervals through the day, but most importantly:

- before preparing food
- between handling raw and cooked or ready to eat foods
- after going to the toilet
- after eating or smoking
- after using a tissue or handkerchief
- after handling rubbish or cleaning

How to wash hands thoroughly

Hands must be washed in a designated hand wash basin, which is **only** used for washing hands. Make sure you:

- wet your hands with warm water
- apply **liquid hand soap** and lather well for at least 15-20 seconds
- remember to wash the backs of the hands, wrists, between fingers and underneath fingernails to help remove dirt and germs
- rinse well under warm, running water and ensure all traces of soap are removed
- dry hands thoroughly with single use paper hand towel.



PREVENTING UNNECESSARY FOOD CONTACT

Many food handlers use gloves to prevent unnecessary contact with food, however, it is important to remember that gloves only act as a physical barrier between your hands and the food. That is, they do not protect food from contamination. If not used correctly, gloves can also contaminate food and increase the risk of food borne illness.

How to use gloves correctly

Food handlers must wash and dry their hands thoroughly before putting on and after taking off their gloves. Gloves must never be taken off and set aside to be re-used at a later time. As soon as the gloves are taken off, they are to be disposed of in the rubbish bin.

Gloves must be changed regularly throughout the day to ensure they are not a contamination risk.

When to change gloves

To avoid contamination make sure you change your gloves:

- at least every hour
- if they tear, break or become contaminated
- after handling money
- when switching between raw and ready to eat foods
- after any cleaning task
- after touching your hair scalp or face
- whenever you would ordinarily wash your hands.

Alternatives to gloves

If you chose not to wear gloves when handling food, there are other alternatives to avoid touching cooked or ready to eat foods.

- clean, sanitised utensils such as sandwich cutter guards
- serving utensils such as tongs, spoons and spatulas
- food wraps.

REQUIREMENTS FOR FOOD BUSINESSES

Food handler health

If a food business owner knows, or reasonably suspects that one of their food handlers are ill or sick, they are required to take appropriate action to ensure that staff member does not engage in food handling activities.

Food handler hygiene



A food business must provide adequate hand washing facilities. These hand washing facilities must at all times:

- only be used for the purpose of washing hands. Never use hand wash basins for washing dishes or food preparation
- provided with adequate supplies of warm running water through a single spout (at least 40°C), liquid hand soap and paper hand towels
- be easily accessible and unobstructed.

For more information go to penrithcity.nsw.gov.au or phone 4732 8055