

## Essentials of Personal Hygiene

High-risk foods require maximum hygiene precautions when handled because they are particularly liable to support the growth of food poisoning bacteria.

High-risk foods are products and/or ingredients that are ready-to-eat, eg eaten without cooking immediately before eating, or other treatment that would destroy food poisoning bacteria.

If you're engaged in handling high risk foods, remember by law you must observe the following essentials of personal hygiene:

- Appropriate protective clothing should be worn including hair protection. Hair should be well protected against it falling onto or otherwise finding its way into the food
- You must not cough, sneeze, pick your nose or wipe it on your sleeve, spit, test food with fingers, or otherwise touch your mouth, skin, hair etc whilst handling/serving food
- Finger nails should be kept short and clean regardless of use of gloves when serving food; false nails should not be worn when handling food as these might fall into food; do not use coloured nail varnish as this can mask dirt under your nails
- Jewellery should be kept to the minimum, particularly rings, watches etc as these harbour harmful bacteria; there is also the risk that these items might fall into food
- Cuts, open wounds, sores, etc should always be covered with catering blue waterproof plaster
- Do not smoke, eat or drink in food preparation/service areas, including behind counters, bars, etc.

## Hand Washing

Effective hand washing is one of the most important, indeed, most crucial factor in preventing food poisoning. For hand washing to be effective, you must observe the following:

- You must use a wash hand basin exclusively for this purpose
- You must use comfortably hot water and soap (anti-bacterial liquid soap is preferable)
- Rinse hands properly before drying them
- Dry your hands properly by using a hygienic means ie disposable paper towels, clean roller towels; never dry your hands on a tea towel, service cloth or protective clothing as this poses a potential for cross-contamination

Hands should be washed as frequently as necessary throughout the day, but ALWAYS:

### BEFORE:

- starting work
- touching raw meat and high risk foods

### BETWEEN:

- handling raw and cooked meats/foods

### AFTER:

- handling raw meat/food
- handling raw eggs in their shell
- visiting the toilet
- coughing or sneezing into your hands
- touching your hair or face, nose, skin, etc
- carrying out cleaning jobs or touching containers of cleaning chemicals
- handling rubbish/waste and bins
- eating, drinking and smoking (in areas set aside for these activities)

If hands aren't clean they can spread food poisoning bacteria all around the kitchen. But a quick rinse won't make sure they're really clean, so it's important for all staff to know how to wash their hands properly.

## How to Wash Your Hands Properly

### Step 1

Wet your hands thoroughly under warm running water and squirt liquid soap onto the palm of one hand



### Step 2

Rub your hands together to make a lather



### Step 3

Rub the palm of one hand along the back of the other and along the fingers. Then repeat with the other hand



### Step 4

Rub in between each of your fingers on both hands and round your thumbs



### Step 5

Rinse off the soap with clean water



### Step 6

Dry hands thoroughly on a disposable towel. This should take between 10 and 20 seconds.



Remember that everyone who handles food always need to wash their hands before starting work, after a break, after going to the toilet, after emptying a bin and before starting a new task.

## **Should I Use Gloves?**

You don't need to use gloves for good hygiene. In fact, using gloves can actually cause problems unless you're careful how you use them.

Remember, you need to wash your hands properly whether you use gloves or not.

If you use gloves, make sure you do the following things:

- Wash and dry hands thoroughly before putting on gloves
- Change gloves frequently
- Change gloves after handling raw foods and before handling cooked/ready-to-eat foods
- Throw away gloves that are torn, dirty or contaminated (don't leave them on work surfaces)
- Throw away gloves when they are taken off for any reason
- If you stop preparing food to do something else, such as answering the telephone or taking money from a customer, always take off your gloves and put on a fresh pair before starting to handle food again
- Never re-use gloves

Information on this subject and many others is available on the Food Standards Agency website – [www.food.gov.uk](http://www.food.gov.uk).

You can also contact the Food Safety Team on 01225 776655 ext 594 or email [environmentalhealth@westwiltshire.gov.uk](mailto:environmentalhealth@westwiltshire.gov.uk)