

# Food Safety Fact Sheet

## Handwashing

### INTRODUCTION

Handwashing is the single most important practice in any school nutrition program. School nutrition employees can improve the safety of the food they serve by washing their hands frequently, correctly, and at the appropriate times.

### HERE ARE THE FACTS

Foodborne illnesses are transmitted by food handlers that contaminate food and food contact surfaces. Individuals who handle food when they have a foodborne illness, gastrointestinal illness, infected lesion, or are around someone who is ill can pass along those illnesses. Individuals can simply touch a surface that is contaminated with a bacteria or virus and pass that along to others. Handwashing minimizes the risk of passing along bacteria or viruses that can cause foodborne illnesses. Follow state or local health department requirements.

### APPLICATION

**It is important to know how and when to wash hands and exposed areas of the arms.**

How?

- Wet hands and forearms with warm running water at least 100 °F and apply soap.
- Scrub lathered hands and forearms, under fingernails, and between fingers for at least 10–15 seconds. Rinse thoroughly under warm running water for 5–10 seconds.
- Dry hands and forearms thoroughly with single-use paper towels.
- Dry hands using a warm air hand dryer.
- Turn off water using paper towels.
- Use paper towel to open door when exiting the restroom.

When?

- Beginning to work, either at the beginning of shift or after breaks.

Before

- ◊ Moving from one food preparation area to another
- ◊ Putting on or changing disposable gloves

After

- ◊ Using the toilet
- ◊ Sneezing, coughing, or using a handkerchief or tissue
- ◊ Touching hair, face, or body
- ◊ Handling raw meats, poultry, or fish





## Handwashing cont.

- ◇ Eating, drinking, or chewing gum
- ◇ Clean up activity such as sweeping, mopping, or wiping counters
- ◇ Touching dirty dishes, equipment, or utensils
- ◇ Handling trash
- ◇ Handling money
- ◇ Any time that hands may have become contaminated

**Remember, follow state or local health department requirements.**

### References

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