

Handwashing in Food Service

Handwashing is the single most effective means of preventing the spread of bacteria and viruses, which can cause infections and foodborne illness.

Employees can be a significant source of harmful microorganisms. Proper handwashing can be the most effective action workers can take to control direct and indirect contamination of food, utensils, and equipment.

When To Wash Hands:

- Before starting to work with food, utensils, or equipment.
- During food preparation, as needed.
- When switching between raw foods and ready-to-eat foods.
- After handling soiled utensils and equipment.
- After coughing, sneezing, using a tissue, or using tobacco products.
- After eating and drinking.
- After touching bare human body parts.
- After handling animals.
- After using the toilet, wash hands at a handsink in the bathroom; and again when returning to work.

Correct Way to Wash Hands – Always Follow These Six Steps!

Before washing your hands, remove any jewelry and only wash your hands in sinks designated for handwashing. Do not wash your hands in utensil, food preparation or service sinks.

1. Roll up sleeves and wet hands with warm water.
2. Using soap, not a hand sanitizer solution, work up a soapy lather that covers hands and forearms.
3. Rub hands together for at least 20 seconds; make sure to wash palms, back of hands, between fingers, and forearms.
4. Use a fingernail brush to clean under fingernails and between fingers.
5. Rinse hands and forearms in warm water. Keep fingertips pointed down while rinsing.
6. Dry hands with single-use paper towels or cloth roller towel. Turn off the faucet with paper towels to prevent re-contamination of hands.

For Further Information Contact the Following MDH District Offices:

Bemidji	◆	(218) 308-2100
Duluth	◆	(218) 723-4642
Fergus Falls	◆	(218) 332-5150
Mankato	◆	(507) 344-2700
Marshall	◆	(507) 537-7151
Metro	◆	(651) 201-4500
Rochester	◆	(507) 206-2700
St. Cloud	◆	(320) 223-7300

To request this document in another format, call 651-201-4500 or TTY 651-201-5797.

IC# 141-0818



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