

Employee Personal Hygiene

Importance of Proper Hygiene

Employees are the most important link in preventing foodborne illness. Good personal hygiene, including proper and frequent handwashing is the best way to prevent foodborne illness.

Restricted and Excluded Employees

Food employees who are ill with vomiting or diarrhea must be excluded from working in the establishment.

Food employees must be restricted from working with exposed food, clean equipment, utensils, linens, and single-service or single-use items who have:

- An enteric bacterial pathogen capable of being transmitted by food, including *Salmonella spp.*, *Shigella spp.*, or *Escherichia coli O157:H7*.
- Persistent sneezing, coughing, or a runny nose.

Handwashing

Always make sure that hands are washed and thoroughly dried before starting work, between tasks, and before working with food products, equipment, utensils, and linens. Correct handwashing includes cleaning the backs of hands, palms, forearms, between fingers and under the fingernails using warm water, soap, and a fingernail brush.

Cuts, Wounds, and Sores

Any cuts, wounds, or open sores on the hands and arms must be completely covered by a waterproof bandage. Wear single-use gloves or finger cots over any bandages on the hands and fingers.

Hair Restraints

Employees are required to wear hair restraints such as hair nets, hats, scarves, or beard nets that are effective in keeping their hair in control.

Employees such as counter staff, hostesses, wait staff, and bartenders may not be required to wear hair restraints if they present a minimal risk of contaminating exposed food, clean equipment and utensils, and unwrapped single-service or single-use articles.

Proper Work Clothing

Employees who prepare or serve food products or wash and sanitize equipment or utensils must wear clean outer garments. It is recommended that aprons, chef jackets, or smocks are worn over street clothing.

Keep spare personal clothing and other personal items away from food handling and storage areas. Employers must provide adequate storage areas for employee's personal belongings. If employees routinely change clothing at the establishment, a room or area must be designated and used for that purpose. Such changing areas must be separate from food, clean equipment and linen.

Wearing of Jewelry

The wearing of jewelry should be limited to plain banded rings only. Necklaces, bracelets, earrings, and other jewelry should not be worn when preparing or serving food.

For Further Information Contact the Following MDH District Offices

Bemidji	◆	(218) 308-2100
Duluth	◆	(218) 302-6166
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.



Food, Pools, and Lodging Services Section
 625 North Robert Street, P.O. Box 64975
 St. Paul, MN 55164-0975
 651-201-4500
<http://www.health.state.mn.us>