

Handwashing for Employees

How to wash your hands

1. Wet your hands
2. Apply soap
3. Rub your hands for 10 to 15 seconds
4. Rinse your hands
5. Dry your hands
6. Keep hands clean

The entire process must last at least 20 seconds. Gloves, wet-wipes or hand antiseptics are not substitutes for handwashing.

When to wash your hands

Wash your hands as often as possible. It is important to wash your hands:

- Before starting to work with food, utensils, or equipment
- Before putting on gloves
- 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 skin, face or hair
- After handling animals
- After using the bathroom
- As often as needed during food preparation and when changing tasks

Where to wash your hands

Only wash your hands in sinks designated for handwashing. Do not wash your hands in utensil, food preparation or service sinks.

Do not block the area around handwashing sinks or stack items, such as soiled utensils, in them. Do not use handwashing sinks for any other purpose.

Keep handwashing sinks clean and well stocked. Handwashing sinks must have:

- Warm running water
- Soap
- Disposable towels, a continuous towel system, or a heated-air hand drying device
- Sign or poster reminding employees to wash their hands

Hand antiseptics

Hand antiseptics are usually gels or liquids that can be rubbed on clean, dry hands after handwashing. Hand antiseptics can reduce the number of disease causing bacteria on clean hands, but are not a replacement for proper handwashing.

When used after proper handwashing, hand antiseptics can provide additional food protection. Wash hands properly before using a hand antiseptic.

Alcohol based hand antiseptics are not effective against norovirus, the most common cause of foodborne illness.

Resources

[Minnesota Department of Health Food Business Safety
\(www.health.state.mn.us/foodbizsafety\)](http://www.health.state.mn.us/foodbizsafety)

Minnesota Department of Health
Food, Pools, and Lodging Services
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St. Paul, MN 55164-0975
651-201-4500
health.foodlodging@state.mn.us
www.health.state.mn.us

Minnesota Department of Agriculture
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*To obtain this information in a different format, call:
651-201-4500 or 651-201-6000.*