

## Topic 3. Personal Hygiene

Everyone has bacteria on and inside their bodies. You have bacteria on your, skin, hands, underneath fingernails, in your hair, ears, nose and throat and other body areas.

About 64 per cent of the population carry food poisoning bacteria (*Staphylococcus aureus*) in their ears, nose, and throat and on their hands.

As a food handler you must be careful not to contaminate food with these bacteria. This topic details personal hygiene 'dos' and 'don'ts'.

Personal hygiene is making sure that the food handler is clean and knows what to do to keep food clean and safe.

### Clothing, nails, hair and jewellery

#### Clothing

The uniform that you wear in the food industry is designed to protect food from your body and will depend on the kind of food that you handle. Your clothing should not contaminate food or a food contact surface.

Protective clothing includes: overalls; aprons; uniforms; protective coats; hair nets/hats; beard snoods and disposable food handling gloves.



#### ✓ Do

- ✓ Store personal belongings and clothing in a locker or changing room
- ✓ Wear a clean, well-fitted uniform and shoes to protect the food
- ✓ Take off your apron when you go to the toilet or outside the food preparation area

#### ✗ Don't

- ✗ Store personal belongings and clothing in food preparation or food storage areas.
- ✗ Change in the toilet.
- ✗ Wear unsuitable clothes for food handling such as shorts and thongs.

### Nails, hair, and jewellery

Nails, hair, and jewellery harbour bacteria and can also fall into food.

#### Nails

#### ✓ Do

- ✓ Keep them short and clean.

#### ✗ Don't

- ✗ Wear artificial nails as they can fall off and into food.
- ✗ Wear nail polish as it can chip off into food. You also won't be able to see if your nails are clean underneath.

## Hair

### ✓ Do

- ✓ Keep hair clean and tied back when handling food.

### ✗ Don't

- ✗ Touch or comb your hair when preparing food.

## Jewellery

### ✗ Don't

- ✗ Wear watches and rings as bacteria live on watchstraps and jewellery.
- ✗ Wear rings or body piercings with stones as they can fall into food.
- ✗ Touch your face and body piercings.

**Remember** that jewellery can:

- Be an occupational health and safety hazard. It can heat up near cooking appliances and burn your skin. It can also get caught in machinery
- Stop you from washing your hands thoroughly.

## Wash your hands - when, how and what you need

### When to wash your hands

Your hands come into contact with food all the time. Wash your hands thoroughly before and during work to keep the number of bacteria down.

Always wash your hands after:

- Handling rubbish, washing out rubbish bins and cleaning
- Going to the toilet and starting work or coming back from a break
- Blowing your nose, coughing or sneezing
- Smoking
- Eating or drinking
- Handling money
- Touching any part of your body like scratching, touching earrings or your hair or wiping sweat from your forehead
- After handling raw food and before handling ready-to-eat food



## How to wash your hands

**Step 1:** **Apply** soap and wet hands with warm water

**Step 2:** **Wash.** Use soap and warm water to thoroughly wash your hands right up to the forearm and between your fingers for at least 60 seconds.

**Step 3:** **Rinse** hands under warm, running water.

**Step 4:** **Dry** hands using an air dryer or paper towel.



Apply soap



Wash



Rinse



Dry

## What – you need to wash your hands

1. Soap, (liquid antibacterial soap is best for hand washing as it kills bacteria and is non-perfumed)
2. Warm running water
3. Disposable paper towels or an air dryer
4. Rubbish bin to throw the used paper towels into

Talk to your Food Safety Supervisor if your hand wash area has run out of supplies of soap or paper towels.



### Food Safety Supervisor says...

*“Don’t use the food preparation sink for hand washing.  
Never use the hand wash basin for food preparation”.*

## When you are sick

As a food handler you have a responsibility to tell your Food Safety Supervisor when you are sick in order to avoid contaminating the food.

**Remember:** Never cough or sneeze near food or a food contact surface.



### Food Safety Supervisor says...

*"If you are sick it is best to go to your doctor, get a medical certificate and take your doctor's advice about when you can return to work. I must record your illness in the Food Safety Program".*

## Smoking

Smoking is not allowed in any area where food is received, stored, prepared, transported or served.

Ash, cigarette butts and smoke can all contaminate food. Smoking can also cause coughing which can contaminate food.

When smoking, harmful bacteria are passed from your mouth, to your hands and onto the food. **Make hand washing a habit!**



## Gloves - How to use and when to change

### Food-handling gloves

Disposable food-handling gloves are a great tool to help you handle food safely. Dirty food-handling gloves can be worse than dirty hands and can contaminate food.

- ✓ **Do** change your gloves frequently (such as every half hour) and:
  - ✓ After handling garbage
  - ✓ After every break
  - ✓ Between handling raw and cooked foods

- ✗ **Don't** use food-handling gloves for:
  - ✗ Anything other than handling food
  - ✗ For handling money
  - ✗ For cleaning, handling packaging or picking things up off the floor
  - ✗ When moving from one task to the next



### Cuts and wounds

Cover with a blue food handler's band-aid and disposable glove.