

Handwashing Basics

Handwashing is the most effective means of preventing the spread of bacteria and viruses. Proper handwashing can prevent contamination of food, utensils, and equipment.

Six Steps to Handwashing:

1. Remove any jewelry and then 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 up the forearms.
4. Use a fingernail brush to clean under fingernails and between fingers.
5. Rinse hands and forearms in warm water.
6. Dry hands with single-use paper towels. Turn off the faucet with wrist/forearms or with paper towels to prevent re-contamination of hands.



When to Wash Your Hands

- Before starting to work with food, utensils, or equipment.
- Before putting on gloves.
- During food preparation, as often as needed, and when changing tasks.
- When switching between raw foods and ready-to-eat foods.
- After handling soiled utensils and equipment.
- After coughing, sneezing, or using a tissue.
- After eating, drinking, or using tobacco products.
- After touching your skin, face, or hair.
- After handling service animals, fish in aquariums, or molluscan shellfish or crustacea in display tanks.
- After using the toilet, wash hands at a handwash sink in the restroom, and again when returning to work area.

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.

