



DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH County of Riverside

INFORMATIONAL BULLETIN NO. 38-08-DES

DID YOU WASH YOUR HANDS?

Washing your hands thoroughly and often can greatly reduce bacteria transferred from person to person. Removing bacteria and viruses from your hands prevents them from getting into food and onto other surfaces where they can eventually lead to illness. It's the easiest and most effective way to protect your family, your friends, and total strangers from getting sick. Good personal hygiene, including hand washing, is vital when preparing food. In fact, the law requires food handlers to wash their hands.

How Do I Wash My Hands?

It is important to understand that there is a *right* way to wash your hands.

1. First, turn on the warm water (minimum of 100°F) and wet your hands under the running water.
2. Next, put some liquid handwashing soap in your hand.
3. Wash your hands for at least 10-15 seconds. It might be easy to time this by singing a song like "Happy Birthday to You" two times in your head or saying the alphabet slowly. Rub your hands together to make a lather making sure to get in between all of your fingers, under your nails, and all the way up to your elbows.
4. When you have finished, rinse the soap off with warm clear water.
5. Dry your hands with a paper towel or hot air blower.
6. Use the paper towel to turn off the water faucet so you don't pick up more germs!



How Often Should I Wash My Hands?

Wash your hands anytime they are contaminated. Without exception, you should wash your hands before you make food for yourself or anyone else. Hands should be thoroughly cleaned after handling raw meats or poultry, and also when switching between different food types. Some bacteria and viruses transferred by people are deadly. Properly wash your hands in all of the following instances:

- Before engaging in food preparation
- After touching body parts other than clean hands
- After using the restroom
- After caring for or handling any animal
- After coughing sneezing, using a handkerchief or disposable tissue, using tobacco, eating or drinking
- After handling money
- Before dispensing or serving food
- Before initially putting on gloves to work with food
- When switching between working with raw and ready-to-eat foods
- During food preparation in order to prevent cross-contamination
- After any other activity that can contaminate hands

**As a rule of thumb, if you
would not want to eat
what is on your hands,
wash it off!**

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Gloves and Hand Sanitizers



Gloves/Hand Sanitizers DO NOT replace proper handwashing!

Both gloves and hand sanitizer lotions are additional barriers to illness causing germs. These should NOT be considered an alternative to washing hands.

A gloved hand should be washed as often as one without. The bacteria still accumulate and grow on the glove and can be passed onto food or utensils. Do not reuse gloves. If there are cuts or abrasions on hands or fingers, gloves will prevent the bacteria in the wounds from spreading.

Hand sanitizers do kill bacteria. However, the dead bacteria and toxins will not be removed without using soap to wash your hands followed by rinsing your hands under water. Sanitizers are designed to supplement regular hand washing to reduce the spread of illness, not replace it.

**Mom always told you
to wash your hands.
Mom's advice is good.
Wash your hands!**

*Document available in an alternate format upon request

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