

Food Safety Information

Handwashing

Washing your hands before and during food preparation is one of the best ways to prevent the spread of food poisoning bacteria.

A survey by the Food and Drink Federation, published during National Food Safety Week 2001, found that:

26% of men and 17% of women said they do not always wash their hands before preparing food
31% of men and 17% of women said they do not regularly wash their hands after using the toilet

If you don't wash your hands before food preparation, your hands could be covered in dirt and bacteria from the toilet, the bin or from many other sources inside and outside the home. These could then be transferred onto food and cause food poisoning.

It's also very important to wash your hands after handling raw foods because you could spread bacteria from them to other foods (cross-contamination).

Make sure you wash hands thoroughly, using warm water and a liquid soap. Work up a good lather and make sure you wash your wrists, hands, fingers, thumbs, fingernails, and in between the fingers. Rinse the soap off your hands with clean water.

It's also important to dry your hands thoroughly because bacteria spread more easily if your hands are damp. Dry your hands on a clean hand towel, not on a tea towel or your apron.

And remember:

- don't handle food when you are ill with stomach problems, such as diarrhoea or vomiting.
- don't touch food if you have sores or cuts, unless they are covered with a waterproof dressing.

