

Clean Hands for Clean Foods

Since the staff at temporary food service events may not be professional food workers, it is important that they be thoroughly instructed in the proper method of washing their hands. The following may be used as a guide:

- Use soap and water
- Rub your hands vigorously as you wash them.
- Wash all surfaces, for at least 20 seconds, including:
 - Back of hands
 - Wrists
 - Between fingers
 - Under fingernails using a good brush
- Rinse your hands well
- Dry hands with a paper towel
- Turn off the water using the paper towel instead of your bare hands

Wash your hands in this fashion before you begin work and frequently during the day, especially after performing any of these activities:

- After touching any bare human body parts other than clean hands and clean, unexposed portions of the arms
- After using the toilet room
- After caring for or handling animals
- After coughing, sneezing, using a handkerchief or disposable tissue
- After drinking, using tobacco, or eating
- After handling soiled surfaces, equipment or utensils
- During food preparation, as often as necessary to remove soil and contamination and to prevent cross contamination when changing tasks
- When switching between working with raw food and working with ready-to-eat food
- Directly before touching ready-to-eat food or food-contact surfaces, and
- After engaging in other activities that may contaminate the hands.

The Top Six Causes of Food Poisoning

From past experience, the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention list these six circumstances as the ones most likely to lead to illnesses. Check through the list to make sure your event has covered these common causes of foodborne disease:

- **Inadequate Cooling and Cold Holding.** More than half of all foodborne illnesses are due to keeping foods out at room temperature for more than 2-4 hours.
- **Preparing Food Too Far Ahead of Service.** Food prepared 12 or more hours before service increases the risk of temperature abuse.
- **Poor Personal Hygiene and Infected Personnel.** Poor handwashing habits and food handlers working while ill are implicated in 1 out of every 4 illnesses.
- **Inadequate Reheating.** When leftovers are not reheated to above 165° F, illness can result.

- **Inadequate Hot Holding.** Cooked foods not held at 135° F or above until served can become highly contaminated.
- **Contaminated Raw Foods and Ingredients.** Serving raw shellfish or raw milk that is contaminated, or using contaminated raw eggs in sauces and dressings, has often led to outbreaks of foodborne disease. It is always safer to use pasteurized products.
- **REMEMBER: WHEN IN DOUBT, THROW IT OUT!**