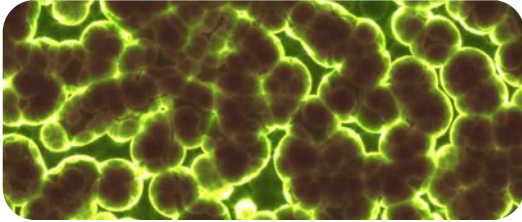




MEALTIME MEMO

AUGUST
2024

PREVENTING ILLNESS WITH HANDWASHING AND GLOVE USE



Hands can harbor unseen germs that can contaminate food and surfaces and ultimately make people sick. They can also transfer allergens to allergen-free foods. The good news is that proper handwashing and glove use are simple yet effective practices that can help prevent the spread of foodborne illness and allergen contamination.

CROSS-CONTAMINATION VERSUS CROSS-CONTACT

Let's review the definitions of cross-contamination and cross-contact, according to the ICN's [*Child Care Center Food Safety Guide*](#).

- **Cross-contamination:** The transfer of microorganisms from hands-to-food, food-to-food, or equipment and food contact surfaces-to-food.
- **Cross-contact:** Occurs when an allergen is accidentally transferred from a food containing an allergen to a food or surface that does not contain the allergen.

WHEN TO WASH HANDS

Practice proper handwashing to prevent the spread of cross-contamination, cross-contact, and illness. Wash your hands *before* **and** *after* each of the following tasks:

- Preparing food
- Eating or drinking
- Participating in food activities
- Treating a cut or wound

It is also necessary to wash hands **before** the following tasks.

- Starting work
- Serving food
- Putting on or changing single-use gloves
- Handling clean dishes or utensils
- Changing food prep tasks (i.e., working with ready-to-eat (RTE) and raw food)
- Handling allergen-free foods

Lastly, wash hands **after** the following tasks.

- Using the restroom
- Sneezing, coughing, or blowing your nose
- Handling raw meat/poultry/fish or soiled dishes/utensils
- Touching hair, face, or body



- Changing a baby’s diaper, helping a child in the bathroom, or helping children wash their hands
- Touching an animal/pet, animal waste, or pet food/treats
- Sweeping, mopping, doing dishes, wiping counters, or touching garbage
- Returning from outdoors
- Using the phone
- Hands become dirty or contaminated



You can print the ICN’s [When to Wash Your Hands](#) poster to hang throughout your center.

HOW TO WASH HANDS

The six steps to handwashing are as follows:

1. Wet hands with clean, warm, running water and apply soap.
2. Lather your hands and wrists, between your fingers, and under your nails.
3. Scrub for at least 20 seconds—you can sing the “Happy Birthday” song twice.
4. Rinse with clean, running water.
5. Dry hands with a clean, disposable paper towel or mechanical hand dryer.
6. Turn the water off with a paper towel. Use it to open the door, then discard it into a trash can.

Activity for kids: [Glitter Germs](#) is a simple but effective lesson designed to teach young children about proper handwashing.

You can print ICN’s [Effective Handwashing](#) poster to hang by your handwashing sinks.



AVOID BARE HAND CONTACT

Bare hands should never touch ready-to-eat (RTE) foods. RTE foods can be eaten without additional washing, preparation, or cooking. Examples include fresh produce, bread, luncheon meats, and cheese. Any germs on the hands could easily contaminate RTE foods and may cause foodborne illness.



When handling RTE foods, always wash your hands and wear single-use gloves or use appropriate utensils such as tongs, spatulas, forks, or spoons.

PROPER GLOVE USE

Wearing single-use gloves can help keep food safe by creating a barrier between the germs on hands and the RTE foods. Ensure the single-use gloves are food-safe.

Properly wash hands **before** putting on new gloves.

Wear gloves:

- When the person handling food has a cut or open wound—cover the wound with a waterproof bandage and a single-use glove.
- When handling RTE foods—unless using utensils, such as tongs or spoons.

Change gloves:

- When interruptions occur or when changing tasks.
- When gloves become torn, dirty, or contaminated.
- Before preparing allergen-free foods.
- After touching surfaces or objects other than food (refrigerator handles, cans, cell phones, door handles).
- After touching raw meats or unwashed fruits and vegetables.
- After sneezing, coughing, or touching skin or hair.
- After 4 hours, even if working with the same kind of food.



Do not reuse or wash gloves.

You can print the ICN's [Properly Use Disposable Gloves](#) poster to hang in food preparation areas.

LUNCH TIME SCENARIO

To avoid cross-contamination and cross-contact, it is important to wash hands properly, change gloves, and use utensils throughout the process of preparing and serving food. Let's go through a scenario of the meal preparation steps and detail when you need to wash your hands and put on or change gloves **before** you complete the step.

Lunch Menu: Ham and cheese sandwiches, carrots sticks, canned peas, 1% milk

Wash Hands	Put on or Change Gloves	Meal Prep Step *
Yes	No	Start of meal preparation.
No	No	Gather equipment and utensils: can opener, utensils, cutting board, knife, pot, serving dishes, and plastic wrap. Collect canned peas and bread from the pantry.
No	No	Open canned peas with a can opener and pour them into a pot to cook.
No	No	Collect ham, cheese, and carrots from the refrigerator.
Yes	Yes	Lay slices of bread on a cutting board and place layers of ham and cheese on the bread.
No	No Gloves are still on.	Cut the sandwiches in half and set them on the serving plates.**
Yes	Yes Put on a new pair of gloves.	Portion the carrots into serving dishes.
No	No	Spoon the peas into serving bowls.
No	Take off gloves after this step.	Cover each serving dish in plastic wrap and put dishes on a tray or cart to bring to rooms.
Yes	No	Get the milk from the fridge and put it on the cart.

* It is recommended to clean your food prep area between tasks.

**Meals are served family style. The food preparer will place the prepared food into serving dishes that will go to each classroom for the children to serve themselves.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Check out the ICN's food safety resources designed for use in the food preparation and service areas.



- [Child Care Center Food Safety Guide](#) and [Family Child Care Food Safety Kit](#) offer tips and techniques for safely preparing food.
- [Handwashing Posters](#) provide information on handwashing techniques.
- [Food Safety Mini-Posters](#) display information on current food safety topics.

CLASSROOM DISCUSSION PROMPTS

Spark positive conversations with children about handwashing with these questions.

- Why do we need to wash our hands?
- When should we wash our hands?
- What are the five steps to make sure our hands are clean?
- What song can we sing while washing our hands to ensure we wash them long enough? How many times do we sing that song?



MENU IDEAS

The following menu ideas provide a variety of foods, colors, and textures. Some recipes contain multiple food components listed in parentheses after the recipe.

Breakfast	Lunch/Supper	Snack
Berry Medley and Quinoa Breakfast Bake (Grain, Fruit) 1% Milk	Baked Tilapia Fish Filets Wild Rice Baked Beans Sugar Snap Peas 1% Milk	Nectarine Slices Mini Rice Cakes Water

RECIPES



- The [Child Nutrition Recipe Box](#) has USDA-standardized recipes for child care centers and family child care homes.
- The [Child Nutrition Recipe Box: New CACFP Lunch/Supper Recipes](#) has standardized recipes per age group (3–5 and 6–18 year-olds) and for 6, 25, and 50 servings.

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