



Environmental Health Division
55 Brown Road, Ithaca, NY 14850
(607) 274-6688; Fax (607) 274-6695



Eliminate Bare Hand Contact with Ready-to-Eat Food In Your Food Service Establishment

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have documented that viruses and bacteria on a food worker's hands can contaminate ready to eat foods and cause illness. Proper use of single-use food-grade gloves, utensils, deli wraps and/or napkins significantly lower the risk of foodborne illness. Proper glove use provides an added level of protection for your customers and gives a visual cue to customers that your establishment cares about serving safe food.

Multiple barrier protection must be used for ready-to-eat foods that will be served to the public. Multiple barrier protection means a combination of thorough hand washing and proper use of single-use disposable gloves, utensils, deli wraps or napkins to eliminate bare hand contact.



All owners, managers, and food service workers must take the necessary steps to eliminate bare hand contact with ready to eat foods. It is critical to insure that employees properly **wash their hands** for at least **20 seconds** before putting on gloves. Pathogens thrive in the warm, moist atmosphere created on a gloved hand.

Bare hand contact with ready to eat foods, when observed by the Health Department, results in a red critical violation. A re-inspection is then conducted within two to three weeks. If bare hand contact is observed during the re-inspection, the Tompkins County Board of Health will take action and penalties may be assessed against the facilities owner/operator.

REMEMBER: *A ready-to-eat food is in a form that is edible without additional preparation to achieve food safety, although it may be reheated for aesthetic reasons. This includes the foods that have been cooked, but require further preparation such as the addition of condiments like pickles, onion and lettuce to a hamburger. Gloves are required when:*

1. *preparing fruits and vegetables*
2. *slicing cold cuts and cheese*
3. *preparing salads*
4. *handling breads, toast, buns, bagels and garnishes*
5. *preparing sandwiches, subs, wraps and hotdogs*
6. *handling ice*

REMEMBER: *Remember that gloves are just an extension of your hand. If the gloves become soiled, they can pass contamination. Change gloves:*

1. *at appropriate times and often – at least once per hour*
2. *when they become torn, punctured or contaminated*
3. *after touching anything other than food*
4. *when changing tasks*

*For example: When you finish working with raw meats, thoroughly wash hands vigorously under warm flowing water for at least **twenty seconds**, dry hands on single use towels, put on gloves to work with ready-to-eat fresh vegetables for salads.*

If you have questions, contact the Tompkins County Health Department at 607-274-6688, Monday through Friday between 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. A representative of the Department will discuss your procedures and help you protect the health of your customers. Additional training materials are available on request.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Inclusion through Diversity