

# Hand Hygiene

As a food handler you have a legal responsibility to ensure that food does not become contaminated. Contaminated food could be harmful to health because it contains something that should not be there.



Solutions that promote good hand hygiene reducing the risk of infection.

There are three types of contamination:

## PHYSICAL



Something that is visible in the food.

## CHEMICAL



Cleaning chemicals and pesticides.

## BIOLOGICAL



Bacteria, viruses, moulds and fungi.

These contaminants get into food either directly by touching or falling into the food or indirectly via a vehicle - hands being one of the main vehicles that lead to contamination of food.

## When should you wash your hands?

- Before starting work
- Between handling different food types
- After visiting the toilet
- After coughing and sneezing
- After cleaning
- After dealing with refuse and waste
- After eating, drinking and smoking



Considering the list above, regular hand washing is vital in a food environment to reduce food contamination. For a food handler this can lead to sore and chapped hands which may flake, bleed or become infected, thus leading to food contamination. Therefore it is important that the soap is good quality and mild on the hands. It is also important that it is non-perfumed as this can taint food.

## Method of Hand Washing

To reduce bacteria to a safe level; hands need to be washed in warm water for a minimum of 20 seconds, paying attention to under and around the nails, between the fingers and up the wrists.



## Soap Dispensers

Soap dispensers are hand contact surfaces and could contribute to the spread of bacteria. Tork soap dispensers are easy to change (5 seconds) and are single use bottles that are made up of hard and soft plastic to allow the bottle to collapse thus reducing wastage meaning less need for food handlers to deal with refuse and waste.

## Effective Drying

To dry hands effectively, paper towels need to be of good quality and very absorbent. To reduce physical contamination Tork hand paper towels are strong so they don't tear easily and most are available in blue to enable quick detection in food.

Due to the high quality of the towels fewer towels are required to dry hands thoroughly. This helps to reduce wastage and meet environmental considerations. Additionally the perforation and folding systems of the towels means that there is little need to touch the dispenser or other towels thus reducing contamination. The side window of the dispenser should be checked regularly to ensure the dispenser does not run out. This assists food handlers in complying with the correct procedures.