

# FOOD HYGIENE HAND WASHING

## What is the importance of hand washing?

The purpose of hand washing is to prevent transfer of bacteria to the food you prepare and to other people. Hand washing removes or destroys bacteria picked up by the hands, and also reduces the numbers that normally live on the skin.

## When to wash your hands

Some bacteria can stay alive on our hands for up to three hours. So you need to wash your hands regularly throughout the day and especially at these times:

### Before:

- Preparing food
- Eating
- Looking after babies or the elderly
- Starting work

### Between:

- Handling raw foods (meat, fish, poultry and eggs) and touching any other food or kitchen utensils

### After:

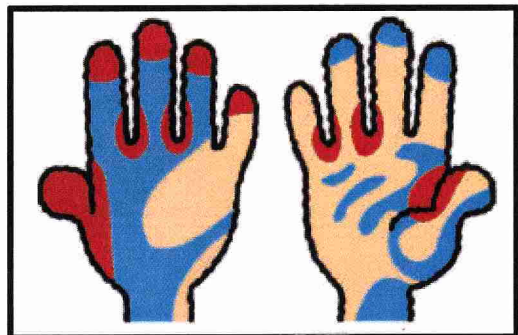
- Handling raw foods, particularly meat, fish and poultry
- Going to the toilet
- Touching rubbish/waste bins
- Coughing or sneezing, especially if you are sick – **YOU MUST NOT WORK WITH FOOD ILL**
- Changing babies and clearing up accidents

## Do you know how to wash your hands properly?

We all think we know how to wash our hands but many of us don't do it properly. Simply rinsing the tips of fingertips under cold water does **NOT** count.

- Areas most frequently missed during hand washing
- Less frequently missed
- Not missed

(Adapted from Taylor L. (1978), An evaluation of hand washing techniques - I, Nursing Times, 12 January, pp 54-55)



See overleaf for the hand washing procedure.

## Did you know?

- Up to half of all men and a quarter of women fail to wash their hands after they've been to the toilet.
- Right handed people tend to wash their left hand more thoroughly than their right hand, and vice versa.
- We have between **2 and 10 million** bacteria between fingertip and elbow.
- Damp hands spread **1,000 times** more germs than dry hands.
- The number of germs on your fingertips **doubles** after you use the toilet.
- **Millions of germs** hide under watches and bracelets and there could be as many germs under your ring as there are people in Europe.