

Washing hands

Proper hand washing is one of the most important and easiest ways to prevent illness.

To correctly wash hands:

- Use soapy water
- Rub hands together for 15-20 seconds, cleaning all surfaces of the hand
- Rinse hands well
- Dry with a clean towel
- Wash & dry hands thoroughly before starting to prepare or eat any food, even a snack.

Make sure you wash and dry your hands thoroughly after:

- Using the toilet
- Changing nappies
- Smoking
- Touching animals
- Blowing your nose
- Coughing or sneezing into hands
- Cleaning surfaces or handling waste, and
- Handling raw foods such as raw meat, poultry, eggs and fresh fruit & vegetables

Clean kitchen, utensils & eating areas

- Keep benches and tables clean & dry. Wipe down and dry every time food is prepared or served from them
- Keep kitchen equipment and tools clean & dry. Clean after each use
- Only use clean plates, cups, utensils, chopping boards etc. Wash after each use
- Keep tea towels clean & dry and wash them regularly. After using a tea towel to dry dishes, hang it up to dry. If using tea towels to wipe up spills, wash after each use
- Clean sponges, scourers & dish brushes after each use. Rinse them in hot water and wring out. Alternatively, put them on a hot wash in the dishwasher. Leave to dry before using again
- Discard sponges, scourers & dish brushes when they show signs of permanent soiling
- For spills on the floor or messes from pets, it's best to use a single use paper towel
- Don't let animals into the kitchen and eating areas, if possible. Keep animals' feeding bowls out of the kitchen

Avoid cross contamination

- Don't let raw meat & poultry come into contact with other foods. Store raw meat on a plate or in a sealed container at the bottom of the fridge to prevent meat juices dripping onto other foods
- Use a separate cutting board & knife for raw meat or poultry. If this isn't possible, wash cutting boards and knives thoroughly in hot soapy water and dry thoroughly before using to prepare other foods
- Thoroughly wash & dry all food equipment, such as bench tops and tools, that come into contact with fresh produce
- If using grey water for the garden, don't use it on the vegetable patch or herb garden

Don't make food for others if sick

- Some food poisoning bugs carried by people who are unwell with something like diarrhoea can be passed on through food they prepare.
- Wait at least 2 days after symptoms of illnesses such as vomiting & gastro have stopped before preparing food for others.
- If you have to prepare food for others and you are unwell or have been unwell in the previous 2 days, ask someone else to cook or organise takeaway food. If this isn't possible, it's very important to:
 - Wash hands thoroughly in soapy water & dry before preparing any food, and
 - Follow the key food safety tips.
 - Ideally, heat all food to steaming hot, at least 60°C, before serving.

Emergencies

It's critical to continue to practise good hygiene during emergencies.

This can be challenging for a number of reasons:

- Access to safe water for cleaning can be difficult.
- Floodwater can be contaminated with sewage, waste & other substances that can cause illness.
- Food, surfaces & cooking utensils can be contaminated by unsafe floodwater and splashes.
- Fires can cause toxic fumes to contaminate food & kitchen equipment, even inside cupboards and fridges.

For tips on emergency events see food safety in emergencies.

<http://www.foodauthority.nsw.gov.au/consumers/keeping-food-safe/cleaning-and-hygiene#.VJaGD5DDY>