



Food safety advice

FOOD HANDLERS: FITNESS TO WORK

Most food poisoning is caused because people contaminate food by not thinking about what they are doing or how they are doing it. Even something simple like washing your hands regularly could prevent food poisoning.

In this advice sheet we try and explain your responsibilities for protecting food from contamination.

Your responsibilities as a food handler:

You can pass on germs that cause illness in others when you handle food; germs that come from you and germs from the food you are preparing. To prevent this happening you must:

- Wash your hands regularly
- Tell your employer if you are unwell
- Do not come to work with diarrhoea or sickness (vomiting), D&V
- Do not return to work too soon, stay away from handling food until you are well and 48 hours free of symptoms

Wash your hands thoroughly using warm water and soap...

- after using the toilet; at home and at work
- before starting work and after breaks
- after handling raw meat & chicken/dirty vegetables
- after handling rubbish
- dry your hands thoroughly after you've washed them.



Tell your boss if you...

- have been sick (vomiting) or are feeling sick
- have diarrhoea
- have infected (red, swollen, pus-containing) sores or cuts
- feel very unwell
- were ill whilst on holiday or upon your return to the UK
- if anyone in your household is sick or has diarrhoea.

If you have sickness or diarrhoea it may be caused by a something you can pass on; you must not handle food until you are better. **You must be free from any symptoms for at least 48 hours before you return to work - longer for some illnesses.**



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Typhoid and paratyphoid fever are rare but serious illnesses. You must tell your boss if you think you have been in contact with either of these diseases, usually after travelling abroad.

Your checklist for good hygiene practice:

- Wash and dry hands thoroughly before handling food, after going to the toilet and after handling raw meat & chicken/dirty vegetables.
- Do not handle food if you are suffering from diarrhoea and/or vomiting.
- Tell your boss if you or anyone in your household is ill.
- Tell your boss if you have infected cuts or sores.
- Use a brightly coloured (normally blue) waterproof covering for cuts and grazes.



- Do not spit, smoke, touch your eyes/nose/mouth, eat or chew gum when you are handling food.
- Make sure your work clothes are clean.
- Keep your workplace, especially surfaces and utensils, clean.
- Clean and sanitise touch points such as taps and door handles (fridges, cupboards etc...) regularly with an antibacterial cleaner.
- Tell your boss if you were ill whilst on holiday.

If you have to visit your doctor, remember to tell them that you are a food handler.