Handwashing prevents food contamination

- Food handlers may contaminate food by touching a source of bacteria with their hands and then touching food that they prepare or serve.

_The Center for Disease Control estimates that poor personal hygiene accounts for the contamination in 25% of all documented food illness outbreaks._

Where can bacteria be found?

- On raw meat, poultry, and seafood. (Poultry, beef, and pork can be contaminated by disease-causing bacteria from internal organs during slaughtering, and seafood from polluted water.)
- In feces from humans, insects, and rodents.
- On contaminated equipment, food contact surfaces such as cutting boards and countertops, and filthy cloths.
- In the pus of pimples.
- In the mucus of the nose.
- In infected cuts on the worker's hands.

_Workers with cuts should always use clean bandages and sterile gloves or finger covers. Remember, gloves only protect food from bacteria located on the hands. Gloves can also become contaminated._

When is it important for food handlers to wash their hands?

- After handling raw meat, poultry, and seafood
- After visiting the restroom
- After sneezing and coughing
- After touching one's face, nose, and hair
- After smoking or eating
- After cleaning
- After handling money
- Before beginning work