

# Preventing Contamination from Hands

## Preventing bare hand contact

Employees need to avoid contacting ready-to-eat food with bare hands. Handle ready-to-eat food by using:

- Deli tissue
- Spatulas
- Tongs
- Single-use gloves
- Dispensing equipment

Employees also need to minimize bare hand contact with food that is not ready-to-eat. Improperly used utensils or gloves can be a vehicle for cross-contamination.

It is the duty of the person in charge to prevent contamination of food from bare hands by:

- Monitoring employee food handling and handwashing.
- Excluding employees who are ill with vomiting or diarrhea.

## Single-use gloves

When used with proper handwashing, gloves are one way of preventing contamination of ready-to-eat food from bare hands.

Gloves are not a replacement for proper handwashing. Never wash and reuse disposable gloves. Gloves should be task specific. Use gloves for one task and then discard them. Wash hands before putting on new gloves.

Always discard and change gloves:

- As soon as they become soiled or torn.
- Before beginning a different task.

- After handling raw animal product.
- Before handling cooked or ready-to-eat food.
- At least every four hours during continual use.

## Highly susceptible population

Bare hand contact with ready-to-eat food is never allowed for employees who are serving a highly susceptible population.

“Highly susceptible population” means persons who are more likely than others in the general population to experience foodborne disease because they are:

- Immunocompromised, or preschool-age children, or older adults.

### AND

- Obtaining food at a facility that provides services such as custodial care, health care, or nutritional or socialization services.

## Handling ingredients

Bare hand contact is allowed if you are adding ready-to-eat food as an ingredient to a food item that will be cooked to required temperatures and times.

Examples include:

- Adding cheese or other ready-to-eat toppings to a pizza dough.
- Adding vegetables to a raw meat dish before cooking.

### Hennepin County Environmental Health

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## Handling finished menu items

Employees who are not serving a highly susceptible population may be allowed to contact ready-to-eat food with bare hands if certain conditions are met.

Written procedures are required that include a list of ready-to-eat food touched by bare hands, a written employee health policy, and documentation of training and additional safeguards. Food establishments may contact their inspector for detailed requirements.

