Hand Washing

Keep your hands squeaky clean

'Keep it clean' is one of the golden rules of food safety as hands can easily spread harmful bacteria to food, work surfaces and equipment.

Did you know that there are over 4 million cases of food poisoning in Australia every year and that poor personal hygiene has been identified as one of the most common causes?

Proper hand washing at the right times helps to prevent bacteria spreading to food and is one of the most important and easiest ways to prevent illness.

You should always wash and dry your hands

before:

- preparing and cooking food
- handling food, especially ready-to-eat foods (eg sandwiches, cut fruit)
- serving food

after:

- using the toilet or helping a child use the toilet
- handling raw meat, raw poultry or raw eggs
- sneezing, coughing, blowing your nose or wiping a child's nose
- changing nappies, handling potties or touching changing mats

- cleaning up accidents in the kitchen
- handling rubbish and cleaning chemicals
- outside activities and touching animals
- touching a cut or changing a dressing

If you are sick, wash your hands after every episode of vomiting or diarrhoea, and do not touch food intended for other people until you are free of symptoms for at least 48 hours.

Practice good hygiene with correct handwashing

Good hand washing removes dirt, leftover food, grease and harmful bacteria and viruses from your hands. Follow these simple tips to ensure you are washing your hands correctly.

1. Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and warm running water.
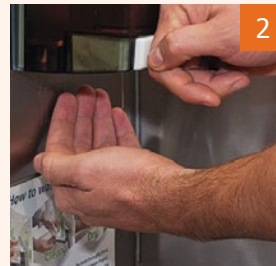
2. Lather your hands by rubbing them together with the soap. Be sure to lather the backs of your hands, between your fingers and under your nails.

3. Scrub your hands for at least 20 seconds. Need a timer? Get your kids to hum the "Happy Birthday" song from beginning to end twice.

4. Rinse your hands well under clean, warm, running water.

5. Dry with a clean towel (preferably paper) or air dry them before preparing or eating food.