Eliminate Bare Hand Contact with Ready-to-Eat Food
In Your Food Service Establishment

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have documented that viruses and bacteria on a food worker’s hands can contaminate ready to eat foods and cause illness. Proper use of single-use food-grade gloves, utensils, deli wraps and/or napkins significantly lower the risk of foodborne illness. Proper glove use provides an added level of protection for your customers and gives a visual cue to customers that your establishment cares about serving safe food.

Multiple barrier protection must be used for ready-to-eat foods that will be served to the public. Multiple barrier protection means a combination of thorough hand washing and proper use of single-use disposable gloves, utensils, deli wraps or napkins to eliminate bare hand contact.

All owners, managers, and food service workers must take the necessary steps to eliminate bare hand contact with ready to eat foods. It is critical to insure that employees properly wash their hands for at least 20 seconds before putting on gloves. Pathogens thrive in the warm, moist atmosphere created on a gloved hand.

Bare hand contact with ready to eat foods, when observed by the Health Department, results in a red critical violation. A re-inspection is then conducted within two to three weeks. If bare hand contact is observed during the re-inspection, the Tompkins County Board of Health will take action and penalties may be assessed against the facilities owner/operator.

If you have questions, contact the Tompkins County Health Department at 607-274-6688, Monday through Friday between 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. A representative of the Department will discuss your procedures and help you protect the health of your customers. Additional training materials are available on request.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Inclusion through Diversity