

SAFE HANDS

We all know the dangers of dirty hands when it comes to food preparation, but did you know that a quick rinse under the tap doesn't actually get rid of dangerous germs?

Most people don't dry their hands either, but leaving hands damp actually helps germs to breed in the moisture, and allows them to spread more easily onto whatever you touch next. So before handling food, don't just splash 'n' dash - wash your hands thoroughly.



How clean are your hands?

The most important way to prevent food poisoning is to wash your hands properly. But while we may think we are careful enough, research shows that many people's hands are still far from clean, even after they feel they've washed them properly.

Go through the motions - thoroughly

So follow this handwashing routine:

- before handling, cooking or eating food, and after handling raw meat or eggs
- after activities such as going to the toilet, changing nappies and petting animals
- more frequently when anyone in your household is sick.



- Area most frequently missed during hand washing *
- Less frequently missed *
- Not missed *

Soap

Wet your hands thoroughly under warm running water and apply soap to them.



Rub

Rub your hands together to make a lather and spread it over all areas of your hands and wrists, making sure it covers palms, backs, wrists, fingernails and fingers, and rubbing between each finger and round your thumbs. It's this action which helps the soap dislodge and remove dirt and germs.



Rinse

Rinse the soap off completely under a stream of clean running water.



Dry

Dry your hands thoroughly, using a clean hand towel or hand dryer, not a tea towel or your clothes.



safefood - It's in your hands

* Adapted from Taylor L (1978), An evaluation of handwashing techniques, I Nursing Times, 12 January.

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