

# Fact Sheet on Employee Health

## Guam Food CODE Five Food Safety Interventions

The new food code has rules that employees must follow to do their part to keep food on Guam safe! It turns out that most of the severe illnesses from unsafe food are caused by an employee accidentally spreading bad bacteria or viruses, known as pathogens, when preparing or serving the food. Therefore, the new food code requires three primary responsibilities from employees, which we will explain below:

- 1) Limiting or Not Allowing Sick Employees To Work with Food
- 2) Washing Your Hands: Correctly and At the Right Time
- 3) Using Gloves

### *Using Gloves*

*Employees are required to use gloves when working with food that is ready-to-eat, such as salads and sandwiches. This is also called, "No Bare-Hand Contact."*

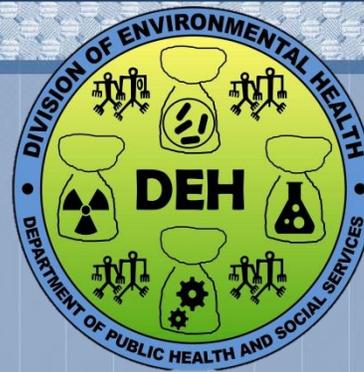


### **WASHING YOUR HANDS: Correctly and at the Right Time**

It may seem simple, but washing your hands is extremely effective in removing those pathogens that can get into food and make people very sick. However, people often don't take hand-washing seriously, causing others to get sick for nothing! To try and fix this, the new food code specifies exactly how and when employees must wash their hands. Even though it may be tempting, don't use a hand-sanitizer in place of actually washing your hands. It's a fine idea to use hand-sanitizer after you wash your hands, but it won't do the job alone.

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## What is Exclusion?

*Exclusion* means a food employee is not allowed to work in an establishment with food. In fact, an *exclusion* does not allow someone to enter the establishment as a food employee, at all!

### I'm Excluded....

#### But can I still work in the back?

NO! *Exclusion* applies to any area where food is received, prepared, stored, packaged, vented, transported, or purchased. Go home, get better, and don't infect anybody else!

## What is Restriction?

*Restriction* means a food employee's activities are limited while at work to prevent spreading the disease. He/She cannot work with exposed food, clean equipment, utensils, linens, or unwrapped single-service or single-use articles. Instead, employees can work as a cashier, bus tables, stock canned food, provide maintenance, etc.

### Why restrict me?

Certain symptoms aren't severe enough for *exclusion*, but we still need to play it safe. That's where *restriction* comes in. Even if you have no symptoms, if DPHSS suspects you, an employee, are at risk of transmitting a foodborne illness, you can be *restricted*!

## Who can exclude and/or restrict me?

Sorry, you can't *exclude* and/or *restrict* yourself! After you report your symptoms and/or diagnosis, the Person-In-Charge (PIC) of an establishment (aka your boss!) can make the call. DPHSS, Guam's public health regulatory authority, can also *exclude* and/or *restrict* employees.

## Limiting or Not Allowing Sick Employees To Work with Food

The most severe illnesses from eating contaminated food, called the "Big 5," include-

- Norovirus
- Hepatitis A virus
- *Salmonella* Typhi
- *Shigella* spp.
- *Escherichia coli* (*E. coli*) O157:H7

The most common way someone would get sick with one of the "Big 5" from food is if an employee who helped prepare or serve the food was also sick with one of the "Big 5" and accidentally transferred pathogens.

Also, some people are more likely to get sick than others (such as children, people in the hospital, and the elderly) and are called Highly Susceptible Populations (HSPs).

Therefore, the new food code makes sure if an employee is sick from, or even has symptoms of, the "Big 5" that they are limited from working with food or not allowed to come to work at all.

And, since HSPs are at a greater risk of getting sick, employees working with HSPs have more strict safety measures.

Common symptoms associated with the "Big 5" are diarrhea, vomiting, a sore throat, fever and jaundice (which is the yellowing of the skin and whites of the eyes).

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