

# Proper Hand Washing for Food Handlers

Hand washing is one of the primary methods used to help prevent foodborne illness. Proper hand washing will reduce your risk of transmitting disease-causing microorganisms such as bacteria, viruses, and other agents to people who eat the food you handle. If you need to use hand sanitizer, always wash your hands first! Dirt, foods, or anything else on your hands makes the alcohol less effective. Do not use hand sanitizer in place of hand washing!

**1**

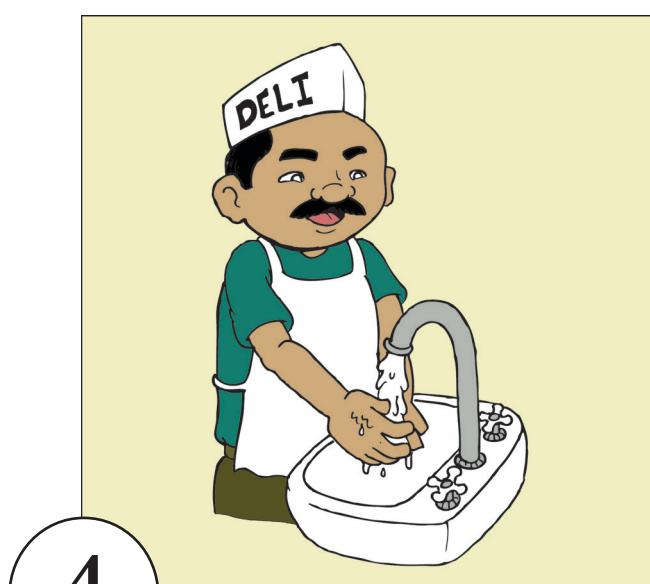
Remove jewelry, except for plain wedding bands.

**2**

Use soap and running water.

**3**

Lather your hands and arms up to your elbows with soap for 20 seconds (sing the Happy Birthday song twice).

**4**

Rinse your hands and arms under running water.

**5**

Use a paper towel to turn off the water. Dry your hands and arms with clean, disposable paper towels. If you use a hand sanitizer, apply it now.

## Wash your hands before:

- Entering a food service station
- Handling ready-to-eat or raw foods
- Touching serving utensils
- Putting on new gloves
- Handling different foods
- Serving foods

## Wash your hands after:

- Visiting the restroom
- Touching bare human body parts (ears, nose, hair, etc.)
- Handling garbage
- Working with raw foods
- Handling cleaning chemicals
- Doing other activities that dirty your hands