



**B**abies are more susceptible to bacteria than older children, and unsanitary food conditions can cause serious infections. General cleanliness, proper food selection, and sanitary food preparation and storage are key to preventing illnesses related to food contamination in babies. Take extra care when handling babies' food, bottles, and utensils to make sure they are safe and clean. State and local guidelines may vary regarding requirements for sanitary food preparation in child care facilities and other institutions. Contact your local health department to obtain the local regulations and standards for food safety and sanitation and to ask about a local food handler course in your area. See Chapter 11, Commercially Prepared Baby Food, for guidelines on purchasing, serving, and storage of commercially prepared baby foods. See Chapter 12, Home-Prepared Baby Food, for information on home-prepared baby food, including information on cleanliness, equipment to use, preparation guidelines for specific types of foods, food safety, and storage of foods.

## Hand Washing

Proper hand washing can help prevent the spread of illness in child care settings. Make sure to wash your hands thoroughly by following these steps:

- Wet your hands with warm running water.
- Add soap.
- Wash all surfaces on hands. Rub vigorously for at least 20 seconds. Wash carefully between fingers, around the tops and palms of hands, over wrists, and under nails using a clean nail brush.
- Rinse your hands well under warm running water, leave the water running while drying hands.
- Dry your hands with a clean, disposable paper towel.
- Turn off the faucet, using the disposable paper towel, instead of your clean bare hands.

### When should the hands be washed?

Wash your hands thoroughly before you:

- bottle feed a baby,
- handle, prepare, serve, or touch food or bottles,



- handle food utensils and set the table,
- touch raw meat, poultry, or fish,
- eat, drink, or feed food to babies or children,
- put away clean dishes,
- give medication.

**Wash your hands thoroughly after you:**

- arrive at the site for the day,
- handle raw meat, poultry, fish, or eggs,
- change a baby's or child's diaper and/or clothing,
- use the bathroom or assist a child in the bathroom,
- handle a baby or child who is ill or give medication,
- come in contact with any bodily fluids (e.g., soiled diapers, urine, blood, feces, vomit, mucus, spit, breastmilk),
- sneeze or cough into tissues or hands,
- get your hands dirty, or have been cleaning, or working outside,
- wipe noses, mouths, bottoms, sores or cuts,
- handle pets, or other animals, or garbage.

Make sure to wash a baby's or child's hands before and after eating meals and snacks, and after changing a diaper (many babies place their hands in the diaper area during changing).

See pages 97-99 for resources on food safety (which include materials on hand washing).

### **If a Caregiver Has an Illness or Infected Injury**

People who are ill and handle food can easily spread their illness to others, including babies and children. Therefore, the following caregivers should not handle food for babies:

- those who have signs or symptoms of illness (including vomiting, diarrhea, and infectious skin sores that cannot be covered); and
- those who may be infected with bacteria or viruses that can be carried in food.

### **Food Preparation Areas Are Not for Diaper Changing**

Do not use food preparation and dining areas or surfaces for changing diapers. Staff and caregivers should make sure to follow the hand washing guidelines above.

## Cleaning and Sanitizing Food Preparation Areas, Equipment, Feeding Dishes and Utensils, and Dining Areas

Clean and sanitize all food preparation, food service, and dining areas (including countertops, tables, and high chairs) before and after each meal. Clean and sanitize all food preparation equipment, dishes and utensils for serving and feeding after each use and store them in a clean and sanitary manner.

Before and after preparing and serving food, the following should be washed with soap and hot water and then rinsed thoroughly with hot water:

- all surfaces used to prepare food, including countertops and tables,
- food preparation equipment and utensils (including food warmers),
- food service and dining areas (including highchairs).

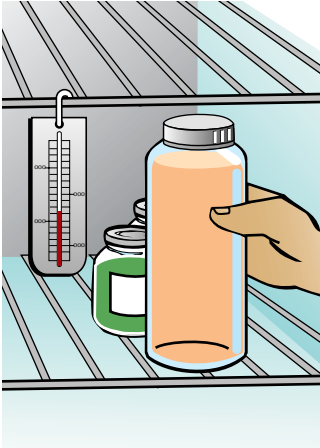
After washing, sanitize all of the above according to applicable Federal, State, and local food service rules and regulations for centers, small and large family child care homes, and other public institutions serving food to infants and children. Follow applicable Federal, State, and local guidelines if a dishwashing machine is used for sanitization.

**Note: Do not use styrofoam cups and plates and breakable disposable plastic utensils. Swallowed styrofoam pieces or broken plastic utensil pieces can cause choking or other injuries.**

Refer to the latest edition of the following publication, for additional guidelines regarding cleaning and sanitizing serving and feeding dishes and utensils and equipment in child care facilities: American Public Health Association and the American Academy of Pediatrics. *Caring For Our Children: National Health and Safety Performance Standards: Guidelines for Out-of-Home Child Care Programs*. Ask your State agency for information on obtaining this publication. It is also available from the National Resource Center for Health and Safety in Child Care, toll-free phone 1-800-598-KIDS, web site: <http://nrc.uchsc.edu>

## Clothing of Caregiver Involved in Food Preparation or Handling

Providers and staff should wear clean clothing and aprons when working with breastmilk, infant formula, or food. Consult with your State agency about requirements for wearing rubber or latex gloves or other types of protective clothing.



## Refrigerator and Freezer Temperature

The refrigerator in the facility should be set at a temperature of 40° Fahrenheit or below and should be checked regularly with an appliance thermometer. The temperature in a freezer should be 0° Fahrenheit or below and should be checked regularly with an appliance thermometer. Have the appliances checked immediately by a qualified repairperson if the temperatures are above those levels.

## Reducing Lead Exposure from Food

To reduce the chances that a baby will be exposed to lead from food:

- Store foods or beverages in covered plastic or regular glass food storage containers. After opening canned foods or beverages, store the leftover food or beverage in such containers. Do not store food or beverages in their opened cans, except infant formula.
- Do not feed babies any canned imported foods or beverages—these cans may have lead seams (lead in seams can leak into the food).
- Do not use decorative or ornamental ceramic ware or pottery, especially if imported from another country, for cooking, storing, or serving food or beverages. Imported dishware may release toxic levels of lead into food.
- Do not cook, store, or serve foods or beverages using:
  - Leaded crystal (glass) bowls, pitchers, or other containers, or
  - Antique ceramic or pewter vessels, dishes, or utensils.These items can release toxic amounts of lead into food.

If using canned foods to make baby food, only use food manufactured in the United States, where can seams cannot contain lead by law.

Wash each baby's and child's hands with soap and water before feeding to wash away dirt and dust that could contain lead. Dust and dirt containing lead can come from outside or inside a house or apartment. For this same reason, it is important to regularly wash toys and wash the hands of babies and children in your care. See page 25 on lead in water.

Figure 10

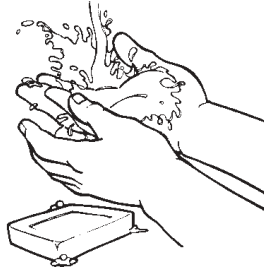
## Hand Washing Tips

### Wash Your Hands Often!

Proper and regular hand washing by adults and children can keep children, caregivers and their families healthier and can help prevent the spread of illness in child care settings. Hand washing is the easiest, least expensive, and most effective way to stop the spread of germs that cause illness. Our hands pick

up germs from objects, other children and adults, food, surfaces, and our own bodies. Once germs are on our hands, they can easily enter our bodies or those we care for and cause illness. Make sure to wash your hands thoroughly by following these steps:

- 1** Wet your hands with warm running water. Add soap.



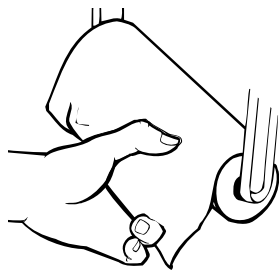
- 2** Wash all surfaces on hands. Rub vigorously for at least 20 seconds. Wash carefully between fingers, around the tops and palms of hands, over wrists, and under nails using a clean nail brush.



- 3** Rinse your hands well under warm running water, leave the water running while drying hands.



- 4** Dry your hands with a clean, disposable paper towel.



- 5** Turn off the faucet, using the disposable paper towel, instead of your clean bare hands.



### WHEN SHOULD THE HANDS BE WASHED?

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- put away clean dishes,
- give medication.

#### Wash your hands thoroughly after you:

- arrive at the site for the day,
- handle raw meat, poultry, fish, or eggs,
- change a baby's or child's diaper and/or clothing,
- use the bathroom or assist a child in the bathroom,
- handle a baby, child, or person who is ill,
- come in contact with any bodily fluids (e.g., soiled diapers, urine, blood, feces, vomit, mucus, spit, breastmilk),
- wipe noses, mouths, bottoms, sores or cuts,
- get your hands dirty or have been cleaning a child, a room, potty chairs, toys, or other objects,
- sneeze or cough into tissues or your hands,
- give medication,
- handle pets, or other animals, or garbage,
- have been playing or working outside.