

MADISON COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT
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DIRECT HAND CONTACT WITH READY-TO-EAT-FOODS

Ready-to-eat food which receives no further processing such as cooking to destroy microorganisms, presents the highest risk of causing illness if it becomes contaminated. Prevention of direct hand contact, whenever possible, therefore, becomes essential.

- A. Food employees must avoid bare hand contact with ready-to-eat food whenever possible by using suitable utensils such as deli tissue, spatulas, tongs, or single-use gloves.
- B. Food employees must wash hands thoroughly before using utensils such as deli tissue, spatulas, tongs or single-use gloves.
- C. If gloves are used to handle ready-to-eat food, they must be:
 - 1. single-use gloves such as vinyl or latex, not heavy duty rubber gloves
 - 2. used for only one task or procedure such as preparing ready-to-eat foods and no other purpose
 - 3. discarded when damaged or soiled
 - 4. discarded when interruptions occur in that operation
- D. Each food establishment shall review its operations annually to identify/document every procedure where ready-to-eat food is routinely (rather than accidentally) handled with bare hands. This list shall be made available to the local health department upon request.
- E. Available alternatives to unprotected direct hand contact with ready-to-eat foods must be considered. They may include suitable utensils or FDA approved sanitizer with residual action. If an alternative is used, it does not have to be included on the list of procedures/work stations where ready-to-eat foods are routinely handled with bare hands.
- F. The retail food establishment must provide special focused education and training to all employees involved in identified direct hand contact with ready-to-eat foods. The operator must provide training in proper handwashing and determine the content and duration of the training. Evidence of this training (content, employees, dates) shall be available to the health department upon request.