

# Food Code Fact Sheet #1

What you should know about the Code

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## OAR 333-150-0000, CHAPTER 3-301.11(B)

Except when washing fruits and vegetables as specified under § 3-302.15 or as specified in ¶¶ (D) and (E) of this section, food employees may not contact exposed, ready-to-eat food with their bare hands and shall use suitable utensils such as deli tissue, spatulas, tongs, single-use gloves, or dispensing equipment. <sup>P</sup>

## PUBLIC HEALTH REASONS:

The three critical factors in the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) Food Code for reducing foodborne illness caused by ill food workers using the restroom and then handling food include: exclusion/restriction of ill food workers; proper handwashing; and no bare hand contact with ready-to-eat foods. Each of these factors is inadequate on its own and may not be effective. However, when all three parts are combined and properly implemented, the transfer of germs causing foodborne illness can be stopped. Oregon requires food workers to prohibit bare hand contact with ready-to-eat food because proper handwashing alone is not enough to prevent foodborne illnesses, like Norovirus, spreading from food worker's hands to foods.

## Prohibiting Bare Hand Contact With Ready-to-Eat Foods

Food workers can spread illness when their hands touch food that will not be cooked before being served. Norovirus is the most common cause of foodborne illness in the U.S. and in Oregon. It spreads easily when a food worker uses the restroom and handles food for customers. Both washing your hands correctly and not touching ready-to-eat food with bare hands are needed to stop people from getting Norovirus.

Ready-to-eat foods do not require any more cooking before they are served. This includes:

- Raw fruits and vegetables after they are washed
- Sandwiches
- Salads
- Breads & baked goods
- Cooked food that is ready for service
- Garnishes for drinks

**Food workers should use utensils when handling ready-to-eat foods, instead of their bare hands.**

Suitable utensils include:

- Deli tissue
- Tongs
- Forks and other serving utensils
- Spatulas
- Toothpicks
- Chopsticks
- Non-latex single-use gloves

Foods that will be cooked prior to service to customers, like a pizza, may be handled with bare hands until it comes out of the oven because it is not considered ready-to-eat.



**Many types of tasks can easily be done with reusable utensils.**

**Use of utensils or single-use gloves does not replace handwashing. Always wash your hands before putting gloves on and when changing them between tasks.**

You must change gloves:

- As soon as they become soiled or torn
- Before beginning a different task
- After handling ready-to-eat food

Never wash and reuse disposable gloves. See [Fact Sheet #10 -Proper Glove Use](#) for more information.

Latex gloves may not be used since they may cause an allergic reaction.

## When to Use Bare Hands vs Utensils

<b>Food</b>	<b>Bare Hands Are Allowed</b> (food is not ready-to- eat*)	<b>Utensils** or Barrier Required</b> (food is now considered ready-to-eat*)	<b>Examples of Utensils** or Barrier to Use</b>
Pasta	Dry pasta or fresh pasta	After cooking	Pasta fork, serving spoon, tongs
Pizza	Pizza dough and raw toppings	After baking or reheating Pizza toppings added after baking	Pizza cutter wheel, spatula, tongs, single-use gloves, large spoon, measuring cup
Tortillas, naan, roti, flatbreads	Raw tortillas, naan, roti, or flatbread dough	Cooked tortillas, naan, roti, pita, any freshly baked bread	Tongs, spatula, deli paper
Rice, beans	Raw rice or beans	Cooked rice or beans	Spoon, spatula, ladle
Sandwiches	Only if sandwich will be grilled or pressed (panini)	For all without a cook step After cooking	Deli paper, tongs, single-use gloves
Meats, poultry, seafood	Raw meats, pork, poultry, and seafood	Cooked meats, pork, poultry, and seafood if not reheating for service.	Tongs, carving fork, spatula
Garnishes like sliced lemons, oranges, limes, pickles	While washing fruits and vegetables	When slicing or serving fruits and vegetables.	Knife, tongs, scoop, toothpick (for garnishing drinks)
Salad greens	While washing (if required)	When tossing salads or serving	Tongs
Sushi	Preparing ingredients that will be cooked before adding to the roll	When assembling ingredients, rolling sushi and serving	Plastic wrap, tongs, single use gloves
Oysters	Only if oysters will be cooked	If served raw or after cooking	Slotted spoon, tongs, spatula
Vegetables like broccoli, green beans, potatoes	While washing (if required), before cooking	After cooking or served raw, like carrot sticks	Slotted spoon, tongs, spatula

\***Ready-to-eat foods** are washed, cooked, or processed products that require no further heating or cooking before consumption.

\*\***Utensils** are handheld tools designed for food preparation, cooking, and baking tasks. They are essential, versatile aids in the kitchen, including items like knives, spatulas, forks, spoons, tongs, deli paper or gloves used to assist in preparing and serving food.