

Personal hygiene in the food sector

1. Introduction: importance of personal hygiene

Bacteria can be found everywhere: they can infect people, animals, plants, air, water and food. They multiply easily in a humid and warm environment. Some harmful bacteria can even threaten our health.

Employees in the food sector can be carriers of dangerous germs unnoticed. The latter can be present in the nose, throat, intestines, on the skin, etc.

Partly due to good personal hygiene, pathogenic bacteria can be kept out of the work environment.

2. Hand hygiene

⇒ **Clean hands are the best guarantee for good hygiene.**

- Short and well-groomed nails;
- No nail polish or artificial nails;
- No jewellery, watches, etc;
- Wounds should always be covered with an appropriate bandage (waterproof, sealed) or with a glove;
- Inflamed wounds require doctor's advice first;
- Don't lick your fingers.

When to wash hands?

- Before work begins;
- After every major break in work;
- In the event of a change of job task;
- Before and after touching raw, processed and soiled products (e.g. fresh vegetables);
- After cleaning the kitchen utensils;
- After touching waste, the waste bin, telephone, doorknob, etc;
- After using the toilet;
- After sneezing, blowing your nose, coughing;
- Before and after taking care of wounds;
- After wearing gloves.

Infrastructure requirements:

- A washbasin with potable, running water;
- This washbasin designated for hand washing only;
- The tap should preferably be operated without hands (e.g. knee, elbow or foot operation);
- Soap dispenser (preferably bactericidal soap). Also preferably with elbow control;
- Nail brush available (regular disinfection and timely replacement);
- Disposable paper towels are preferred;
- Waste bin (preferably pedal bin).

Wash hands:

- Moisten hands, wrists and forearms under running water;
- Take an amount of soap;
- Soap hands, wrists and forearms;
- Don't forget your thumbs;
- Scrub your nails;
- Rinse your hands holding them downwards;
- Dry well with paper towels;
- Always close a manually operated tap with a disposable towel.

3. Hair hygiene

- Tie long hairs together;
- Use a headgear that covers the hair neatly;
- Keep beard and moustache short and groomed;
- Take care of your hair.

4. Oral and nasal hygiene

- Use disposable handkerchiefs for sneezing and coughing;
- Do not sneeze or cough over food;
- Place the crook of your elbow instead of your hand in front of your mouth when coughing;
- Wear a disposable mask if you have a cold;
- Avoid touching your mouth and nose (don't pick your nose);
- Ensure good dental hygiene.

5. Workwear

- Daily clean, tightly closed work clothing (washable at high temp, preferably made of cotton);
- Suitable work shoes (waterproof, non-slip sole), exclusively for use in the working environment;
- Protective clothing (body warmers) should preferably be worn underneath the work clothing;
- Protective apron for dirty activities (e.g. fish processing);

6. Smoking

- Absolute smoking ban

7. Health and hygiene

- Shower daily;
- Always consult a doctor in case of the following:
 - Severe skin conditions (open wounds, boils, ...);
 - Respiratory diseases (severe colds, flu, bronchitis);
 - Disorders of the digestive system (diarrhoea, vomiting).

Need some help? Mensura will be happy to assist you. Call us at 02/549.71.00.