

Glove Use

Gloves can provide a barrier between hands and foods

Why use gloves?

Improper handling of food and poor personal hygiene of food handlers are leading causes of foodborne illness outbreaks. Norovirus—the pathogen responsible for the most reported foodborne illness outbreaks—is transmitted when hands are not washed properly.

Gloves must be appropriately used to provide effective barriers between hands and food. In addition to improved food safety, glove use also creates increased positive customer perceptions about establishment cleanliness.

There currently are no specific requirements for glove use in foodservice establishments. However, Canada's Food Retail and Food Services Code requires that food be protected from contamination.

Hand injuries are estimated to be the second most frequent injury in the foodservice industry after slips, trips and falls. Gloves are also used for hand safety to protect hands from heat, chemicals and sharp objects.

Types of gloves and uses: The scope of on-site food preparation and handling, employee and guest needs, and cost considerations guide a food establishment's glove choices. Many kinds of gloves are available; some are disposable, intended for one-time use, and others are reusable.

Reusable gloves come in three categories: oven mitts/gloves, dishwashing/heavy-duty gloves, and cut-resistant gloves. Heat-resistant oven gloves and cut-resistant gloves may be food-contact surfaces. They must be cleaned and sanitized before being reused.

Dishwashing/ Heavy duty



Freezer



- **Dishwashing/Heavy-duty** neoprene and latex gloves protect hands from moisture, heat and chemicals in dishwashing and general cleaning activities.

Conventional mitts	Puppet mitts	Gloves
		

- **Oven** gloves primarily protect hands from extreme heat for reaching into ovens, carrying hot objects or even dropping a freshly cut potato into a deep fryer tank. Some oven gloves are also flame-retardant and protect hands when working with open flames in an oven, grill or barbecue pit. Oven gloves may also be dual-handed that can be worn on either hand.



- **Mesh** gloves provide protection when handling cutting tools, such as sharp knives or slicers. Metal mesh gloves offer the most protection against cuts and punctures. Since food gets caught in the mesh posing a high potential for cross-contamination, a disposable glove should be worn over the mesh glove. Mesh gloves are available in various sizes and are typically purchased by glove rather than pair.
- **Disposable gloves** serve as an additional protective layer to act as a barrier between bare hands and food to help prevent bacterial and viral contamination of equipment, food and utensils. These gloves may be form-fitting or non-form-fitting and are frequently used in food handling and service.

Form-fitting gloves may be made of vinyl and latex and come in various sizes. Latex gloves may cause allergic reactions in the food handler or in the guest who eats food that has been in contact with the glove. Non-latex polyethylene gloves look, fit and perform like latex but without the risk of allergic reactions.

Non-form-fitting gloves are made of polyethylene and are also called deli gloves. These gloves are also available in small, medium, large and extra-large sizes but are not tight and form-fitting to the hand. Disposable gloves are single-use items used in food handling and must be discarded when removed.

When and how are gloves used?

Disposable gloves do not take the place of good hygiene and proper hand-washing. Food handlers should learn when and how to use gloves. This practice requires training and monitoring to ensure glove use does not contribute to the contamination of food or food contact surfaces. Simply wearing gloves is not the answer. It has been found that improper glove use can be as big a problem as poor hand hygiene.

- Proper use of gloves must be ensured to provide an effective barrier between food and food handler
- Hands must be washed appropriately (at least 20 seconds of lathering with warm water and soap, then rinsed and dried with a disposable towel or air dryer) before wearing gloves or changing gloves
- Wash hands before putting on a new pair and before changing tasks.
- Hold gloves by the edge when putting them on
- Avoid touching the glove as much as possible to avoid contamination. Pathogens on dirty hands can be transferred to the exterior of new gloves when they are removed from the box. Bacteria and other contaminants from the hands have been transferred to the gloves and will be transferred to the food upon contact.

Health officials urge changing gloves as regularly as washing hands. Consider what hands contact. Re-gloving after removing a glove to make change for a customer contaminates the glove.

Never blow into gloves to open them!

Caution: Latex is known to cause allergic reactions in some people!

Disposable Gloves - Safety Tips

Ensure your disposable gloves are	Do not wear food-handling gloves
• Approved for food service • Available in multiple sizes to accommodate individual hand size • Available for latex alternatives • Not washed or rinsed or reused • Changed frequently	• Into the restroom or while using the restroom • To take out garbage • When eating or drinking • While using a facial tissue • While performing cleaning tasks • When handling money
Disposable gloves must be changed	
BEFORE HANDLING ready-to-eat as well as different types of foods AFTER HANDLING raw food (meat, poultry, seafood) AFTER TOUCHING anything that could contaminate hands (such as refrigerator/freezer doors or garbage containers) AFTER COUGHING OR SNEEZING WHEN GLOVES become soiled, ripped or torn IF TASK is interrupted (e.g. answering phone, assisting with cash register) AT LEAST EVERY FOUR HOURS of working on the same task	