

NO BARE HAND CONTACT WITH READY-TO-EAT FOODS

Food Code Update

Nebraska has adopted the FDA Food Code 2022 for food establishment inspections. This food code prohibits bare hand contact with ready-to-eat foods.

What is a ready-to-eat (RTE) food?

A ready-to-eat food is food that will be eaten without additional cooking.

Below are some examples of ready-to-eat foods:

- Ice and garnishes for drinks
- Baked goods and icing
- Sushi
- Deli meats and cheeses
- Salads, sandwiches, burritos, and tacos
- Cooked food for plating
- Any food that will not be thoroughly cooked after it is handled

Alternatives to Bare Hand Contact:



Deli Tissue



Single-Use Gloves



Dispensing Equipment

Tongs

Why can't bare hand contact be used with ready-to-eat food?

Foodborne illness can be serious and in some cases, life threatening. Contaminated hands are a significant factor in the spread of enteric (intestinal) viruses, including Norovirus and hepatitis A virus. Even thoroughly washed hands can contaminate food. Research has shown that handwashing alone may not be adequate to prevent the transmission of viral foodborne illnesses.

Can bare hands be used to prepare food that will be cooked?

Yes, bare hands can be used for washing produce and handling food that will be cooked to at least 145°F, but bare hand contact should be minimized when possible.

Are all food handlers required to wear gloves?

No, gloves are one of several alternatives to bare hand contact. If used, single use gloves shall be used for only one task, used for no other purpose, and discarded when damaged or soiled or when interruptions occur in the operation.

Can I use the same pair of gloves to prepare raw meat or poultry, and then prepare ready-to-eat food?

No, this is called cross-contamination. After handling raw meat or poultry, hands must be thoroughly washed before donning gloves or using utensils to handle ready to eat food.