

# AMY'S FOOD SAFETY SPOTLIGHT

August 2024



## UPCOMING SERVSAFE® CLASSES

August 20<sup>th</sup> – Louisville  
September 9<sup>th</sup> – Louisville  
September 24<sup>th</sup> – Louisville  
October 1<sup>st</sup> - Louisville  
October 21<sup>st</sup> - Louisville

## UPCOMING EVENTS:

Golftoberfest – Monday  
October 7<sup>th</sup> Persimmon Ridge  
Golf Club. Register at  
[www.kyra.org](http://www.kyra.org) under the  
events tab!

## AMY'S FOOD SAFETY SCOOP

### Handwashing

When it comes to following a good personal hygiene program in the workplace, handwashing is the most important part of that program. In March of 2024 the CDC published an article based on a study conducted by the Environmental Health Specialists Network (EHS-NET) where they interviewed and observed food workers to collect data on their food handling practices including handwashing. Here are some important takeaways from that article. <sup>1</sup>

The spread of germs from food workers' hands is a common risk factor to the cause of foodborne illness outbreaks. It accounts for nine out of ten outbreaks in which food was contaminated by food workers. It was found that workers wash their hands when they should only about **one in three times!**

Below are some observations from the study:

Workers were more likely to wash their hands

- When they were not busy
- In restaurants that provided food safety training
- In restaurants with more than one hand sink and with a hand sink where the worker can see it

Workers did about nine activities an hour where they should have washed their hands, but they only washed their hands about 2-3 times an hour.

Only 1 in 4 workers washed their hands after preparing raw animal products or handling dirty equipment and only 1 in 10 workers washed their hands after touching their face or body.



When workers were interviewed, here is what was found:  
 Older workers and managers said they washed their hands more often than younger workers and non-managers  
 Workers identified several factors that affected their ability to wash hands appropriately. Including:

- Time pressure from high volume of business or inadequate staff
- Sink accessibility
- Management emphasis on handwashing
- Consequences for failure to wash hands

More recently, a YouGov asked 24,747 U.S. adults about their hand washing habits at home. The survey specifically focused on how often they wash their hands with soap after using the restroom. Only 58% responded they “always” wash their hands with soap.

Also, a recent study of foodborne illness outbreaks found that 89% involved pathogens to food from workers’ hands.

The FDA has guidelines in the Food Code recommending how and when food workers should wash their hands, it states that the whole process of hand washing should take 20 seconds, the actual scrubbing of hands and arms should take 10-15 seconds. It is also important to remember that the temperature of the water does not matter when you are washing your hands. A build up of good lather is very important; the soap molecules attach to the dirt and germs, lifting them off your skin and when rinsing with water they go down the drain leaving you with clean hands. The FDA recommends the water temperature be at least 85°F, not too hot and not too cold.

Handwashing may seem simple, but it is critical to be trained correctly to avoid spreading pathogens and causing a foodborne illness outbreak. Set a weekly goal to train your team on the importance of handwashing and the proper steps to handwashing.

To learn about other common risk factors to foodborne illness outbreaks sign up for a ServSafe® manager class with the Kentucky Restaurant Association.

<sup>1</sup>CDC – Food worker handwashing in restaurants



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