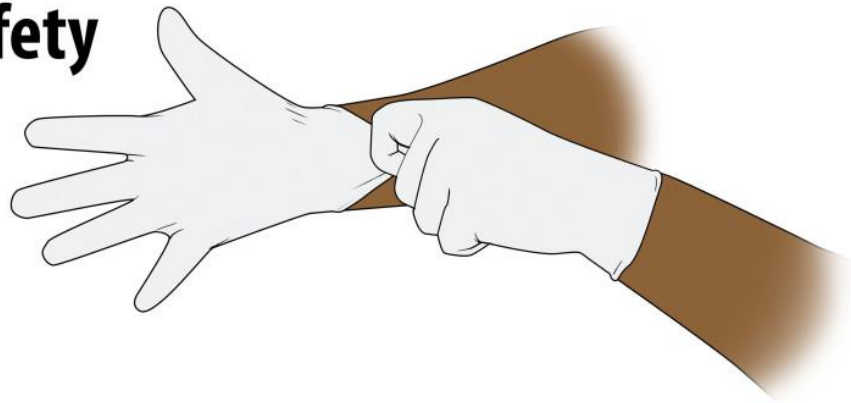




Article by Food Processing. Edited by Janette Hughes

Wearing Gloves for Food Safety



In Australia, the FSANZ Code, Standard 3.2.2 Food Safety Practices and General Requirements state:

- A food handler must take all reasonable measures not to handle food or surfaces likely to come into contact with food in a way that is likely to compromise the safety and suitability of food. (Division 4 | Subdivision 1 | 13 | Page 6)
- A food handler must, when engaging in any food handling operation – take all practicable measures to prevent unnecessary contact with ready-to-eat food (Division 4 | Subdivision 1 | 15, (1), (b) | Page 7)

The FSANZ Code does not dictate that a food handler must wear disposable gloves; just to “take all practicable measures to prevent unnecessary contact with ready-to-eat food”.

Disposable Glove Misuse

For those of us in the food industry, we can all agree there is overusage of disposable gloves. Often disposable gloves are misused and can potentially cause a cross contamination risk.

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Good Hygiene Practices | **Disposable Gloves**

Examples of misuse:

- Disposable gloves handled/worn with unwashed hands
- Hands are washed whilst still wearing disposable gloves
- Staff going to the toilet whilst still wearing disposable gloves, then washing their “hands”
- Raw eggs or carton of raw eggs handled then ready to eat items handled with the same disposable gloves
- Accepting and signing receipt of goods whilst still wearing disposable gloves
- Handling chiller or freezer door handles whilst wearing disposable gloves
- Used disposable gloves placed into pocket for later use
- Disposable gloves removed from carton, dropped on floor, picked up and worn
- Food handled with disposable gloves instead of utensils resulting in breach of allergen management and control
- Raw meat/seafood/egg handled then ready to eat item handled with the same disposable gloves
- Please feel free to add to the list in the comments below....

Disposable Glove Integrity

The proper use of gloves in food processing and food service is predicated on the maintenance of glove integrity. Properly used gloves do a good job — but care must be taken to ensure the right gloves are used and they are changed regularly and immediately if their integrity is compromised.

Examples of loss of integrity:

- An unnoticed pinhole in a disposable glove can release bacteria or virus particles onto the food item
- The atmosphere in most gloves is hot and sweaty, which creates ‘glove juice’ – imagine this substance falling onto the food item if there was a tear in the disposable glove
- It is important that the gloves themselves are not a source of contaminant. To be safe for contact with food the disposable gloves should not allow migration of deleterious substances, colours, odours or tastes to food
- Disposable gloves also have to be kind to users’ hands — occupational skin disease is one of the most frequent causes of lost time in the food industry and skin damage associated with the use of the wrong gloves for the job can result in unnecessary turnover

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Good Hygiene Practices | Disposable Gloves

Types of Disposable Gloves Available

- **Polyethylene** (PE) copolymer gloves are generally the least expensive of all glove types. They are available in high-, medium- and low-density forms. Typically loose fitting, dexterity is lower than that of any other glove type. PE gloves tear quite easily and are not suitable for use around high heat as the heat welded seams on PE gloves are a typical failure region
- **Vinyl** (polyvinyl chloride or PVC) gloves are sometimes considered to be an acceptable alternative to latex as they provide snug fit capabilities and some degree of dexterity. They are more resistant to ozone and oil than natural rubber latex (NRL) and can be worn around heat sources without risk of melting. Stretching the gloves as they are donned can cause holes
- **Nitrile** (carboxylated butadiene-acrylonitrile) gloves are less elastic than latex but are more durable. They feature good physical properties and provide the wearer with good dexterity. Nitrile gloves are resistant to many chemicals but are sensitive to alcohol degradation. While they are abrasion- and puncture-resistant, once breached, they tear easily
- **Natural Rubber Latex** (NRL) makes comfortable, tight-fitting elastic glove types that offer good dexterity, a snug fit, good tactile sensitivity and can withstand high heat. However, many people are now either allergic to latex or to the chemical additives used in the glove-making process. NRL gloves will deteriorate over time by exposure to oxygen, ozone or ultraviolet light and are degraded by oils and solvents such as alcohol
- **Polyurethane** (PU) gloves are free of chemical additives other than the pure polymer itself, consisting of polymeric methylene diphenyldiisocyanate. These glove types offer high tensile strength and durability



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Good Hygiene Practices | **Disposable Gloves**

When to Wear Your Disposable Gloves

Who

- Persons handling exposed ready to eat foods

What

- Ensure disposable gloves are not the same colour as food
- E.g. Can be either blue or purple

Why

- To prevent natural or contaminated bacteria from hands to be transferred onto food
- **Note:** Can also use if handling raw meats, to prevent blood and traces of raw meat from getting under fingernails, etc.

When

- Disposable gloves must be worn during all hand contact with ready to eat product
- Ensure gloves are specifically used if there is a bandaged wound on the hand

How

- **Always** wash and sanitise hands before placing on disposable gloves
- Remember to thoroughly dry your hands
- Gloves are single use only. Once removed, discard in bins provided
- Disposable gloves should be removed when employees leave their job station
- Whenever a glove must be removed, always replace with a new one
- Be conscientious when touching equipment with gloves on
- Always replace gloves to avoid possible cross contamination or damage

Don'ts

- Never place gloves in pockets, on plant and equipment or on product
- Do not handle cool room, fridge, freezer, etc. door handles with a gloved hand
- Do not use disposable gloves for cleaning – use the allocated gloves for this (washing gloves)
- **Note:** If you glove your hand, you cannot feel if the cleaning has been effective
- Do not handle pens or papers or accept a delivery with gloves on

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Good Hygiene Practices | Disposable Gloves

How to Remove Contaminated Disposable Gloves



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