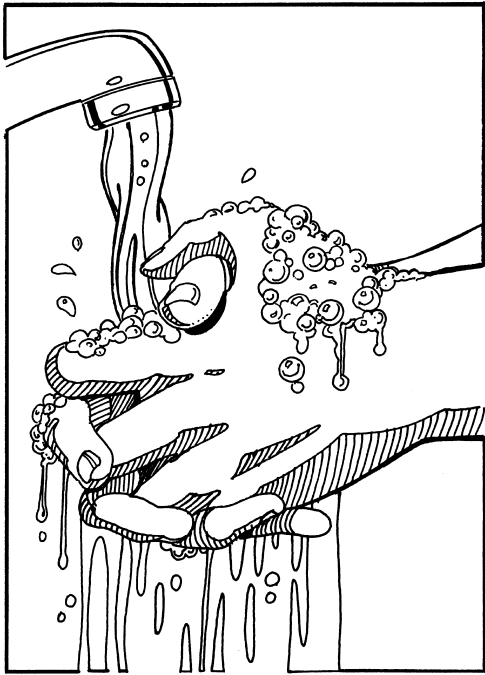# Hand Washing 101

Did your mom always tell you to wash your hands before dinner? She may have known that hand washing is the single most important way to prevent the spread of bacteria. Most foodborne illnesses are caused by a lack of hand washing. You can contaminate food if you have dirty hands, or you can get sick if you touch infected food or a contaminated area and then touch your mouth or face. So one of the best ways to protect yourself and others from foodborne illnesses is to wash your hands. Here's how to do it correctly:

✓ **Use a sink meant for hand washing.**

✓ **Use warm water and soap.**

✓ **Rub your hands and wrists for at least 20 to 30 seconds, concentrating on cleaning fingers and palms.**

✓ **Use a nailbrush to scrub nails clean.**

✓ **Use a paper towel to turn off the water so your clean hand won't be contaminated by bacteria on the faucet.**

✓ **Rinse and dry your hands using paper towels or hot air.**

When should you wash your hands?

A) after handling raw food, nonfood items, garbage, or money or touching any unclean surface

B) after using the restroom

C) after breaks and before entering work areas

D) after eating or drinking

E) after touching your hair, using a tissue or wiping your hands on an apron or towel

F) before putting on food service gloves

G) before handling clean dishes

H) all of the above

If you answered "H," all of the above, pat yourself on the back. (But make sure you wash your hands afterward!)

You Can Beat Foodborne Illness

Remember that the quickest way to spread bacteria is from your hands. If you wash your hands when you're supposed to and avoid touching anything that could contaminate your hands once they're clean, you've got a good chance of beating foodborne illnesses in your workplace.