



Ready-to-eat food:

Ready-to-eat (RTE) food is *in a form that is edible without additional preparation to achieve food safety.*

Examples of RTE Foods:

- ❖ Cooked foods
- ❖ Washed fresh fruits and vegetables
- ❖ Salads and salad ingredients
- ❖ Garnishes
- ❖ Cold meats and sandwiches
- ❖ Raw sushi ingredients
- ❖ Bread, toast, rolls and baked goods



Why is bare hand contact with RTE foods hazardous?

Food that is ready-to-eat may become contaminated by a food worker's bare hand.

Even properly washed hands can contaminate foods.

Thorough and frequent handwashing can reduce this risk-it does not eliminate it. "Ready-to-eat food" is not cooked again before it is eaten, so harmful bacteria from bare hands will not be killed and can cause foodborne illness.

What can be used to handle ready-to-eat foods to prevent bare hand contact*?

Food employees can handle ready-to-eat food without touching it with bare hands by using any of the following utensils or tools to create a barrier:

- ❖ Single-use disposable gloves
- ❖ Forks, tongs, scoops, spatulas
- ❖ Deli paper
- ❖ Toothpicks

What activities can be done safely with bare hands?

- ❖ Preparation of raw foods prior to cooking process
- ❖ Washing of whole fruits and vegetables

***See *Application for Bare Hand Contact Procedure* for requirements to handle ready-to-eat foods with bare hands.**