



# Department of Public Health and Human Services

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## Cottage Food and Farmer's Markets Guidelines for Safe Food Handling in Home Kitchens

To prevent foodborne illness, remember to follow these guidelines:

- **Health**—
  - Food should not be prepared by someone who is sick
- **Hygiene**—
  - wash hands often
  - wear clean outer garments
  - do not eat or drink during food preparation
  - no animals present during food preparation
- **No Bare Hand Contact**—
  - use gloves, tongs, deli tissues, or spatulas
  - no bare hand contact with food that is ready to eat (RTE)
  - Examples of RTE food: baked cookies, snack mix, candy
- **Cross Contamination**—
  - contaminated utensils or surfaces should not contact food
  - utensils and surfaces should be cleaned and sanitized before use

**HANDWASHING:** Proper handwashing is critical and should be carried out often—after touching bare body parts such as the face or hair, after using the toilet, after touching animals, after coughing or sneezing, after eating, drinking, or using tobacco, after handling soiled equipment, when changing tasks, before donning gloves, and any other activity that contaminates the hands.

**SANITIZING:** Sanitize your utensils, dishes, and food contact surfaces after cleaning. Remember to read the directions for each sanitizer and follow the instructions. The sanitizing cycle of a dishwasher may be used. Sanitizers may be purchased or prepared at home, such as a 100-200 ppm bleach solution (prepare fresh). To make a 200-ppm bleach mix 1 tablespoon household bleach into 1 gallon of water. Avoid bleach with scents or gelling agents. Allow the item to air dry to inactivate organisms.

**DISINFECTION:** To disinfect frequently touched surfaces in the kitchen such as handles, refer to the EPA list of disinfectants <https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2>. Disinfectants must be used as specified on their label to be effective (time, surfaces, etc.) A solution of diluted household bleach (at least 1000 ppm; prepare fresh) can be used if appropriate for the surface, with a contact time of at least 1 minute. (Mix 4 teaspoons bleach with 1 quart of water, or 1/3 cup bleach with 1 gallon of water.) Follow precautions on the label.

*CDC Household Cleaning and Sanitizing:* <https://www.cdc.gov/healthywater/emergency/cleaning-sanitizing/household-cleaning-sanitizing.html>

*CDC Cleaning and Disinfection for CoVid19:* <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cleaning-disinfection.html>

*Downloadable Posters with Cleaning, Sanitizing, and Disinfection Protocols:*  
<https://waterandhealth.org/resources/posters/>

## COTTAGE FOOD RULES

### Administrative Rules of Montana, Title 37, Chapter 110, Subchapter 5.

#### 37.110.506 COTTAGE FOOD OPERATOR HEALTH

(1) Cottage food operators must not manufacture cottage food products (for example, working with exposed food; working with cleaning equipment, utensils, and linens; or working with unwrapped single-service or single-use articles) while experiencing the following symptoms:

- (a) vomiting;
- (b) diarrhea;
- (c) jaundice;
- (d) sore throat with fever;
- (e) a lesion containing pus such as a boil or infected wound that is open or draining and is:
  - (i) on the hands or wrists, unless an impermeable cover such as a finger cot or stall protects the lesion and a single-use glove is worn over the impermeable cover;
  - (ii) on exposed portions of the arms, unless the lesion is protected by an impermeable cover; or
  - (iii) on other parts of the body, unless the lesion is covered by a dry, durable, tight-fitting bandage;
- (f) symptoms of any of the following illnesses as diagnosed by a health practitioner:
  - (i) norovirus;
  - (ii) hepatitis A virus;
  - (iii) shigella spp.;
  - (iv) shiga toxin-producing Escherichia coli;
  - (v) salmonella typhi; or
  - (vi) nontyphoidal salmonella.

(2) A cottage food operator experiencing persistent sneezing, coughing, or a runny nose that causes discharges from the eyes, nose, or mouth must not work with exposed food; clean equipment, utensils, and linens; or unwrapped single-service or single-use articles.

History: [50-50-103](#), [50-50-116](#), MCA; [IMP](#), [50-50-103](#), [50-50-105](#), [50-50-116](#), MCA; [NEW](#), 2015 MAR p. 1494, Eff. 9/25/15.

#### 37.110.507 PERSONAL CLEANLINESS

(1) Cottage food operators must keep their hands and exposed portions of their arms clean.

(2) Cottage food operators must use the following procedure in order to keep their hands and exposed portions of their arms clean:

- (a) rinse under clean, running warm water;
- (b) apply an amount of soap;
- (c) rub together vigorously for at least 10 to 15 seconds while:
  - (i) paying particular attention to removing soil from underneath the fingernails during the cleaning procedure; and
  - (ii) creating friction on the surfaces of the hands and arms or surrogate prosthetic devices for hands and arms, finger tips, and areas between the fingers;
- (d) thoroughly rinse under clean, running warm water; and
- (e) immediately follow the cleaning procedure with thorough drying using a single use towel.

(3) Cottage food operators must clean their hands and exposed portions of their arms immediately before engaging in food preparation, which includes working with exposed food, clean equipment and utensils, and unwrapped single-service and single-use articles, and:

- (a) after touching bare human body parts other than clean hands and clean, exposed portions of arms;
- (b) after using the toilet room;

- (c) after caring for or handling service animals, household pets, or aquatic animals;
- (d) after coughing, sneezing, using a handkerchief or disposable tissue, using tobacco, eating, or drinking;
- (e) after handling soiled equipment or utensils;
- (f) during food preparation, as often as necessary to remove soil and contamination and to prevent cross contamination when changing tasks;
- (g) when switching between working with raw food and working with ready-to-eat food;
- (h) before donning gloves to initiate a task that involves working with food; or
- (i) after engaging in other activities that contaminate the hands.

(4) Cottage food operators must keep their fingernails trimmed, filed, and maintained so the edges and surfaces are cleanable and not rough. Unless wearing intact gloves in good repair, a cottage food operator may not wear fingernail polish or artificial fingernails when working with unpackaged food.

(5) Except for a plain ring such as a wedding band, cottage food operators may not wear jewelry on their arms and hands while preparing food, including medical information jewelry.

(6) Cottage food operators must wear clean outer clothing to prevent contamination of food, equipment, utensils, linens, and single-service and single-use articles.

History: [50-50-103](#), MCA; [IMP](#), [50-50-103](#), [50-50-116](#), MCA; [NEW](#), 2015 MAR p. 1494, Eff. 9/25/15.

#### **37.110.508** HYGIENIC PRACTICES

(1) A cottage food operator must not eat, drink, or use any form of tobacco in the registered area of the domestic residence while preparing a cottage food, or where the contamination of exposed food, clean equipment, utensils, and linens, unwrapped single-service and single-use articles, or other items needing protection can result.

(2) Cottage food operators must provide a barrier between the registered area of their domestic residence and all pets while preparing and packaging cottage food items.

History: [50-50-103](#), MCA; [IMP](#), [50-50-103](#), [50-50-116](#), MCA; [NEW](#), 2015 MAR p. 1494, Eff. 9/25/15.

#### **37.110.510** MANUFACTURE OF COTTAGE FOOD PRODUCTS

(1) Cottage food products must be safe, unadulterated, honestly presented, and:

(a) must be offered for human consumption in a way that does not mislead or misinform the consumer;

(b) food or color additives and colored overwraps may not be used to misrepresent the true quality of a cottage food product, although dyeing cookies or other similar products and/or wrapping them for a theme such as a green cookie for St. Patrick's Day or a popcorn ball wrapped in red plastic for Christmas is allowed.

(2) Food must be obtained from approved sources, including:

(a) retail and wholesale establishments licensed by the state of Montana;

(b) fluid and dry milk products must:

(i) be obtained pasteurized; and

(ii) comply with grade A standards.

(c) In many cases local farm products are considered approved sources; consult with your local health authority to make determinations on a case-by-case basis.

(3) Eggs and dairy ingredients must be stored under refrigeration.

(4) Upon receiving food packages from an approved source, food packages must be maintained in good condition and protect the integrity of the contents so the food is not exposed to adulteration or potential contaminants.

(5) Cottage food operators must minimize bare hand and arm contact with exposed food that is not in a ready-to-eat form.

(6) Cottage food operators may not contact exposed, ready-to-eat food with their bare hands, and must use suitable utensils such as deli tissue, spatulas, tongs, single-use gloves, or dispensing equipment.

(7) A cottage food operator may not use a utensil more than once to taste cottage food products or ingredients that are to be sold or served.

(8) Food contact surfaces must be easily cleanable.

(9) Food must only contact surfaces of equipment and utensils that are cleaned and sanitized as specified:

(a) equipment food-contact surfaces and utensils must be clean to sight and touch;

(b) food-contact surfaces of cooking equipment and pans must be kept free of encrusted grease deposits and other soil accumulations.

(c) To the extent practicable, cottage food manufacturers should either dip utensils, dishes, and equipment in a 100 ppm chlorine bleach solution (or other approved sanitizer) and allow to air dry, or use the sanitizing cycle of a dishwasher.

(10) Toxic chemicals such as household cleaners, concentrated bleach, and pesticides must be stored in a way that will not contaminate food, food-preparation areas, and food-contact surfaces.

History: [50-50-103](#), MCA; IMP, [50-50-103](#), [50-50-116](#), MCA; NEW, 2015 MAR p. 1494, Eff. 9/25/15.