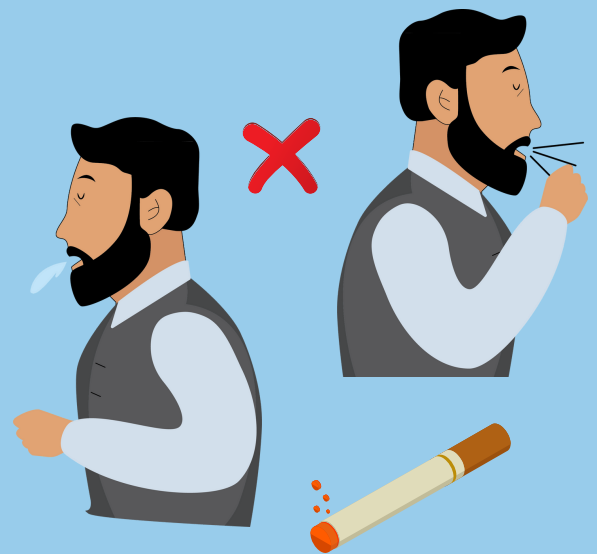


HYGIENIC BEHAVIOUR

Fact sheet No:9B

Why can't I eat, drink or smoke in the food handling area?

- When a person eats, drinks or smokes there is a risk that they will contaminate their hands by touching their face or mouth and transfer this contamination to the food.
- A pathogen called *Staphylococcus aureus* lives on human skin. This bacterium is usually harmless on the skin but if it gets onto food, especially ready to eat food, it can make a toxin that causes human illness, mainly severe vomiting.



- For this reason, eating smoking and drinking should be limited to specific parts of the food business where food is not handled. Food handlers should wash their hands after smoking, eating or drinking BEFORE they start handling food.
- *Staphylococcus aureus* lives in the nose and ears, as well as on the skin. This is why spitting is not allowed in food premises and why sneezing and coughing must be controlled. Food handlers should not pick their nose and should wash their hands after blowing the nose to prevent the spread of *Staphylococcus aureus* onto food.

