

Control of Cross Contamination

Fact Sheet and Hygiene Rating

Improver No. 4



Cross contamination is the most common cause of food poisoning. It happens when harmful bacteria are spread onto food from either food sources (known as direct cross-contamination) or from surfaces, hands or equipment including cleaning equipment that has been contaminated (known as indirect contamination).

Examples of food sources and surfaces that can result in cross-contamination

- Raw meat
- Unwashed fruit and vegetables
- Staff clothing
- Cleaning cloths and sponges
- Equipment and utensils
- Hands
- Complex equipment e.g. meat slicer, or vacuum packer
- Raw milk
- Untreated water supplies

The following table gives examples of risk reduction measures; the left of the table shows the best method for excellent control, in order of effectiveness, followed by an unacceptable layout to the right highlighted in red.

Best Practice	Good Practice Compliant	Acceptable	Unacceptable Non-compliant
Separate rooms solely for raw and ready to eat food preparation	Separate prep areas designated solely for raw and ready to eat food preparation permanently	Same utensils used for raw and ready to eat food preparation (on different occasions), with effective cleaning and disinfection by heat or through the dishwasher	Raw and ready to eat chopping boards placed next to each other where splashes of food could result in cross-contamination
Separate designated equipment and utensils which are colour coded for raw and ready to eat food preparation	Separate designated utensils which are colour coded for raw and ready to eat food preparation	Sleeves rolled up with change of apron or disposable apron between raw and cooked food preparation	Same fridge no separation of raw and ready to eat food
Separate staff for raw and ready to eat food preparation	Separate clothing for staff for raw and ready to eat food preparation, (disposable aprons could be used for raw food preparation)		
Separate fridges for raw and ready to eat food storage	Same fridge raw and ready to eat food storage with raw foods stored at the bottom of the fridge and on separate shelves or compartments of freezers		

Cross Contamination – Factors to consider

- Separate utensils must be used for raw and cooked foods, if the same are to be used (on different occasions), e.g. tongs, containers etc., they must be disinfected by heat or put through the dishwasher.
- If possible use separate fridges and freezers for raw and ready to eat food. If this is not possible, ensure raw food is stored at the bottom of the fridge and on separate shelves or compartments of freezers.
- Complex equipment such as vacuum packers, mincers, slicers must be designated as either raw food only or ready to eat food only.
- Other complex equipment such as scales, food processors, mixers and weighing scales must be assessed to ensure they can be easily cleaned.
- Do not wash raw meat or defrost meat in the sink in water or in large tubs of water. **ersonal hygiene and cleaning and disinfecting properly**

It is necessary to control personal hygiene and cleaning to ensure that you control the E. coli cross contamination risks. See our separate fact sheets on personal hygiene and cleaning for more information.

FOOD HYGIENE RATING

STEP	IMPROVE MY RATING	DONE
1	Do you and your staff understand how cross contamination risks can occur?	
2	When preparing raw food, do you have a completely separate area? If not, are you ensuring you prevent cross contamination risks?	
3	Do you have separate utensils and equipment for raw food?	
4	Have you consider how you wash your equipment to prevent raw utensils/ equipment contaminating other utensils/equipment?	
5	Do you have separate complex equipment for raw and ready to eat food?	
6	Have you also considered the fact sheets on personal hygiene and cleaning?	