



Separate raw and cooked foods

Separating raw and cooked food and the utensils, chopping boards and food contact surfaces that they touch reduces the chance of cross contamination of microorganisms.

Some raw food can carry bacteria and other microorganisms that have the potential to cause illness if allowed to grow and increase in number.

Cooking can kill most food poisoning organisms – it is important not to spread the organisms from the raw food back to the cooked food.

Keeping raw and cooked food separate stops the bacteria from raw food re-contaminating cooked food.

Cross-contamination is what happens when bacteria or other microorganisms are unintentionally transferred from one object to another.

The most common example is the transfer of bacteria between raw and cooked food.

Preparing food hygienically

- Use different utensils, plates and chopping boards for raw and cooked food;
- Wash utensils, plates and chopping boards for raw and cooked food thoroughly between tasks;
- Make sure you do not wash raw meat; and
- Wash your hands after touching raw food and before you handle ready-to-eat (RTE) food.

Storing food effectively

- Cover raw food, including meat, and keeping it separate from RTE food
- Use any dish that has a lip to prevent spillages
- Store covered raw meat, poultry, fish and shellfish on the bottom shelf of your fridge
- Use different utensils, plates and chopping boards for raw and cooked food

The most effective control to minimise the risk of contamination from pathogenic bacteria (pathogens) onto RTE food is the complete separation of staff, storage areas, preparation tables, utensils and equipment. This means there will be no contact between people handling RTE food and those involved in the preparation of food which may be contaminated with pathogens.

There will be circumstances where complete physical separation is not possible, and other controls will be necessary. For example, temporary separation arrangements, space or time separation. Strict cleaning and disinfection between processes must be followed between uses. This means that all RTE should be prepared first and either served for immediate consumption or chilled/stored in the relevant area. Then the food preparation area can be used for the preparation of raw meat and other raw vegetables that require cooking.

Remember - separate raw and cooked foods.

