

# Cross Contamination

Good Hygiene Practice  
Guide No 4

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## HACCP Chart Reference

Storage / Defrosting / Vac Packing / Preparation /  
Cooking / Cooling / Service / Bar / Hospitality

## Legal Requirements

The Food Regulations require general consideration of the layout, design and construction of food premises in order to avoid sources of food contamination. This includes the ability for food production to ideally flow from one side (raw) through preparation and cooking to the service counter (ready to eat) in order to avoid cross contamination.

## Definitions

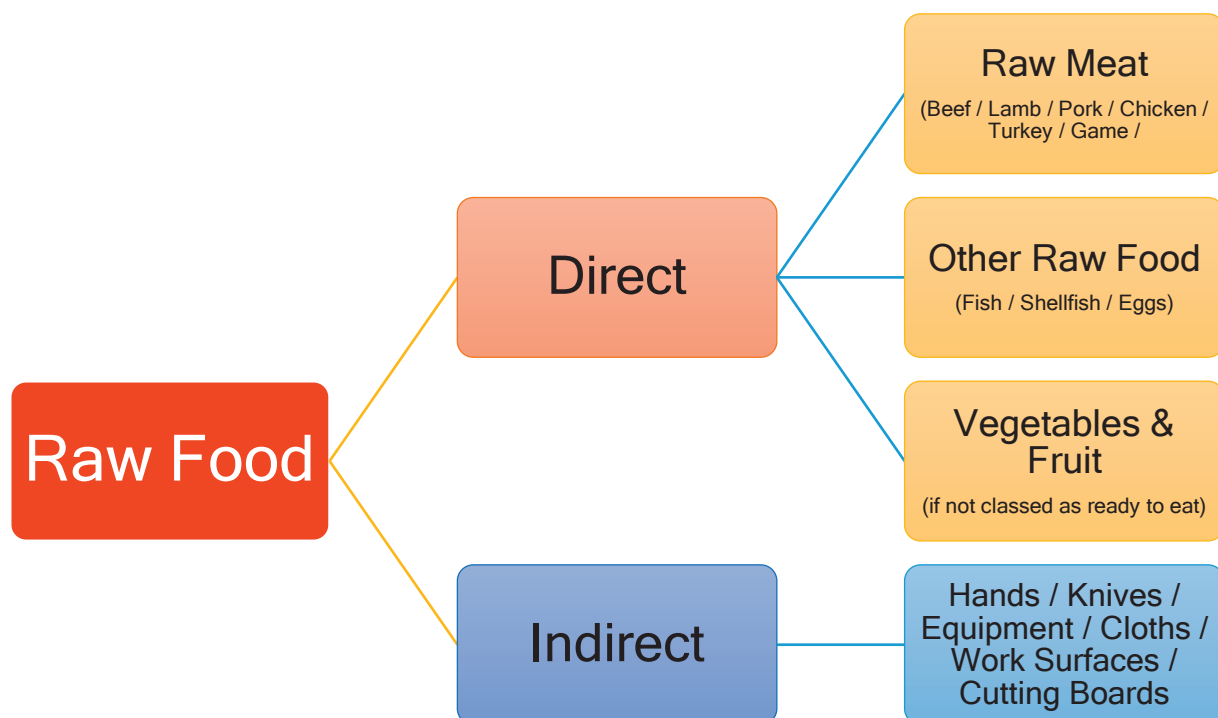
Cross contamination is the transfer of harmful bacteria from raw foods to ready to eat foods.

## Sources of Cross Contamination

Cross contamination has been the cause of significant E. coli O175 food poisoning outbreaks in the UK.

Ready to eat foods must at all times be protected from sources of cross contamination as no further heat treatment or other processes will eliminate any potential harmful bacteria.

There are 2 primary sources of cross contamination. The first being direct contact from raw food to ready to eat food. The second being as a result of indirect transfer of bacteria from raw food to ready to eat food via poor handling practices.



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## Prevention of Cross Contamination

Stage	Controls
Receipt	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ensure raw foods are segregated from ready to eat foods in the delivery vehicle</li><li>• Check and return any damaged or soiled ready to eat foods</li><li>• Always wash your hands after receiving and handling deliveries</li></ul>
Storage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Raw foods must be separated from ready to eat foods at all times during storage</li><li>• Store raw foods at the bottom of refrigeration units to avoid direct contact with ready to eat foods</li><li>• Keep ready to eat foods in appropriate covered containers or cover with food wrap</li></ul>
Preparation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Plan service to ensure that sufficient time and space segregation of raw and ready to eat foods can be achieved</li><li>• Designate a separate raw food preparation area in the kitchen where only raw food is to be handled and prepared.</li><li>• If this is not possible, prepare ready to eat foods separately and before raw foods</li><li>• Ensure all work surfaces are thoroughly cleaned down and sanitised after the preparation of raw foods</li><li>• Wear a separate / disposable apron when handling raw foods and always wash your hands thoroughly after handling raw foods</li><li>• Use separate equipment and utensils for the preparation of raw and ready to eat foods, ensuring they are cleaned and sanitised between use,</li><li>• Where available use designated / colour coded equipment such as:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Chopping boards</li><li>○ Knives</li><li>○ Cleaning cloths</li><li>○ Sanitiser spray bottles</li><li>○ Cling film wrap or tin foil</li><li>○ Disposable gloves and aprons</li></ul></li><li>• Separate complex catering equipment such as mincers, slicers, blenders and vacuum pack machines must be provided and labelled for raw and ready to eat foods</li><li>• Protect ready to eat food equipment and service ware by storing them in separate areas within the kitchen away from any raw food storage or preparation areas</li><li>• Provide separate probe thermometers and label for use, such as taking cooking / hot hold temperature checks and other tasks such as delivery and storage temp checks</li><li>• Designate a raw food preparation sink where possible for washing raw vegetables and fruit or thoroughly clean and sanitise sinks between use</li><li>• Maintain the highest possible standards of personal hygiene, avoiding touching other work surfaces, equipment or clothing</li></ul>

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### Cooking

- Ensure separate utensils are used for handling raw foods and for cooked foods
- Establish a flow to the cooking process ensuring that raw foods are placed onto the cooking range away from cooked foods
- All raw foods must be cooked to a core temperature of 75°C for 30 seconds using a sanitised labelled food probe, that is only used for ready to eat foods.
- Whole cuts of red meat required “rare”, certain fish dishes and eggs may be cooked to a lower temperature.
- When cooking on an open griddle or BBQ create a raw and a cooked side, and move meat & poultry from the raw side across to the cooked side as it cooks

### Cooling

- Only cool foods under supervised conditions ensuring they are kept away from any sources of potential raw food contamination

### Cleaning

- Effective 2 stage cleaning is essential to prevent cross contamination
- Stage 1: removal of debris using a detergent (cleaning)
- Stage 2: disinfection to kill any remaining bacteria using chemical or heat
- Ensure a suitable food safe chemical disinfectant is used
- Units with dishwashers should ensure these reach a temperature of 82°C for 15 seconds in order to achieve thermal disinfection
- For units without a dishwasher disinfection of equipment and utensils used for handling or storing raw foods may be achieved by using a chemical disinfectant and soaking items for the prescribed time.

## Checks

Unit Managers / Head Chefs are responsible for regularly observing the working practices of their colleagues to ensure the above Good Hygiene Practices are implemented to effectively manage the risks of cross contamination

The following checks should be undertaken daily:

- Colleagues are displaying good personal hygiene practices and in particular effective hand washing between the handling and preparation of raw and ready to eat foods
- Sufficient colour coded equipment is provided for the preparation of raw and of ready to eat foods

## Corrective Action

You must ensure that good personal hygiene and hand washing is adhered to at all times. If you believe this is not the case then the following action should be taken:

- Ensure hands are immediately washed
- Replace any soiled or contaminated uniform / PPE
- Discard any ready to eat food believed to have been contaminated

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## Colour Coding

Colour coded equipment helps to prevent cross-contamination and demonstrates good food safety practice.

Any colour coding system used is as an aid to, rather than a replacement for, good hygiene practices.

Keep the colour coding system as simple as possible to ensure it is adhered to. The more complex the system, the more difficult it is to monitor. The following system follows industry best practice, however please ensure you check with your client if any site-specific system is in place.

- **Red:** Raw meat and raw poultry
- **Blue:** Raw fish
- **Brown:** Raw vegetables
- **Green:** Salad and fruit
- **Yellow:** Cooked meats
- **White:** Dairy and bakery



Consideration should be given to a wide range of items included within any colour coding system, for example:

- Chopping boards
- Knives
- Food equipment
- Cling film / foil dispensers
- Sanitiser spray bottles
- Cleaning cloths
- Mops & buckets
- Waste bins



Never store cutting boards in a stack, with cutting surfaces in contact with each other. Place them on racks to reduce the risk of cross contamination and to ensure effective drying.

Store cutting boards used for raw food preparation separately to those used for ready to eat foods i.e. in separate racks.

Cutting boards can be cleaned in the dishwasher, after any debris has been washed off. Supplementary cleaning should be used to remove any staining, using a sanitiser. Replace cutting boards at regular intervals, to avoid excessive wear and scoring.

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## Additional Guidance

1. Personal Hygiene
  - Refer to **Good Hygiene Practice Guide No: 2 - Personal Hygiene** for guidance on good personal hygiene practices / uniform & PPE / food handlers return to work following illness
2. Pest Control
  - Refer to **Good Hygiene Practice Guide No: 3 - Pest Control** for guidance regarding the signs damage and pest infestation
3. Food Storage
  - Refer to **Good Hygiene Practice Guide No:5 - Food Deliveries & Storage** for guidance on food delivery checks and correct food storage arrangements to minimise cross contamination
4. Equipment Maintenance
  - Refer to **Good Hygiene Practice Guide No 14 - Food Premises** for guidance regarding catering equipment service and maintenance
5. Allergens
  - Refer to **Good Hygiene Practice Guide No 13 - Allergens** for guidance regarding allergen cross contamination



