

9.2 Preventing cross-contamination

There are a number of human infections that occur from exposure to ready to eat food contaminated with soil and raw foods. These include Salmonella enterica, Listeria monocytogenes (L. monocytogenes) Campylobacter spp., Clostridium perfringens, Escherichia coli (food-borne gastrointestinal disease), Shigella spp

E. coli O157 in particular is a bacterium of concern because it can cause infections in very low doses – less than 10 bacteria. It can survive refrigeration and freezing and has been shown to be tolerant of acid, salt and dry conditions. The infection can be fatal and is not limited to raw meat but also uncooked flour, raw vegetables and salads.



Preventing contamination

Businesses should ensure that work areas, surfaces and equipment used for raw and ready-to-eat food are adequately separated. This can be done by separating raw and ready-to-eat food processing, separating rooms, staff, utensils and equipment.

If this is not possible then you can clean and disinfect areas that are used for both raw and ready-to-eat food. Raw and RTE foods can only be prepared on shared surfaces at separate times, with cleaning and disinfection in between uses. This method carries the most risk and you must follow specific legal requirements to ensure that food is safe.



Equipment

Complex equipment such as vacuum packing machines, slicers and mincers shouldn't be used for both raw and ready-to-eat food during a normal business day. Ensure you have one machine dedicated for each of these operations.

Personal hygiene

Staff must wash hands using a recognised technique. Anti-bacterial hand gels must not be used to replace handwashing but can be used following handwashing as an additional level of protection.

Gloves are not a substitute for effective handwashing. If gloves are used, they should be changed as often as you should wash hands and you must wash your hands when changing or removing gloves.

Consider use of disposable aprons (or changing apron following raw preparation) and roll up sleeves when preparing potentially contaminated raw food.

Disinfection

If you are using a chemical disinfectant or sanitiser, these must meet officially recognised standards and should be used as instructed by the manufacturer.

To effectively disinfect areas used for both raw and RTE foods, a two stage cleaning process must be followed:

Stage 1: use a detergent to clean and remove any visible dirt followed by rinsing with clean water

Stage 2: disinfect using a disinfectant at the correct dilution and contact time recommended by the chemical manufacturer.

Sanitisers can be used as both a detergent and a disinfectant. When using sanitisers the two stage cleaning and disinfection process, as described above, must still be carried out. You should apply the sanitiser first to provide a clean surface and then again to disinfect.

Disinfectants and sanitisers must at least meet the requirements of one of the following standards: BS EN 1276 or BS EN 13697; or other standards that meet the same conditions and requirements.



Ice machines
disinfected weekly

Regularly change
sanitising solutions



Delivery and collection

Plan delivery times so that, if possible, raw foods arrive at different times to other foods. If delivered together, raw and ready-to-eat foods must be kept separate.

Storage

Ideally, store raw and ready-to-eat food in separate fridges, freezers and display units. If they are in the same unit, store raw meat, poultry, fish and eggs below ready-to-eat food. Unwashed fruit and vegetables should also be kept separate from ready-to-eat food and above raw meat.

Use either separate containers for raw & ready-to-eat foods or clean and heat disinfect between uses i.e using hot water or a dishwasher.

Cover cooked foods and other raw and ready-to-eat food using lids, foil or cling film. Coverings for raw and ready to eat foods should be kept separate.

Defrosting

Keep raw foods that are defrosting in the fridge in a covered container, below ready-to-eat food, or in a separate area of the kitchen away from other foods.

Preparation

Prepare raw foods in different areas. If this is not possible, separate by preparing them at different times to ready-to-eat foods and thoroughly clean and disinfect between tasks using the '2 stage clean'.

Where possible, ready-to-eat food preparation should take place before raw food preparation.

Dedicated colour coded chopping boards and utensils should be used

* Do not wash raw meat or poultry.

4 STEPS TO FOOD SAFETY



CLEAN



SEPARATE



COOK



CHILL