

Preventing Cross Contamination

Harmful bacteria can spread from one food to another directly or indirectly. This can lead to foodborne illnesses if steps like handwashing, cleaning and sanitizing food contact surfaces are not taken.

Prevent cross-contamination and help maintain food safety with these 4 practices:

1. Clean

- Wash hands with soap and warm water before handling food and after using the toilet or touching other items (e.g., petting a dog, using your phone).
- Use clean, drinkable water to wash foods or utensils.
- Clean and sanitize all surfaces, countertops, and utensils before and after preparing food.
- Use clean cloths, or paper towels, to dry and wipe surfaces. Use different cloths for different jobs.



Direct contamination:

Occurs when one food is directly contaminated through contact with another. **Example:** Juices from meat products dripping onto vegetables in refrigerator.



Indirect contamination:

Occurs when an object becomes contaminated and then passes the contaminates from one food to another. **Example:** Food handler does not wash hands when changing tasks.

2. Separate

- Separate foods like raw meat, poultry, seafood, and eggs from other foods in your grocery shopping cart, grocery bags, and refrigerator.
- Use separate tools, cutting boards and utensils for raw meats, poultry, and seafood. Keep these items away from ready-to-eat foods such as fruits and vegetables.



3. Store Foods Properly

- Keep raw meats, poultry, and seafood in containers or sealed bags to prevent juices from dripping onto other foods.
- Defrost meats in a tray to catch liquids that drain off.
- Store raw meats on the bottom shelf of the fridge to prevent drips onto other foods.
- Marinate foods in the refrigerator, not on the counter. Don't reuse marinades used on raw foods.

4. Serve Safely

- Use clean plates and utensils for cooked food; do not reuse items that have touched raw meats or seafood without cleaning and sanitizing.



Tip

Keep hot foods hot & cold foods cold.

Bacteria can multiply quickly when food is left in the danger zone (between 4°C and below 60°C).

