



CIS HSE HOT TOPIC MAY 2008

CROSS CONTAMINATION



Definition: The transfer of bacteria from contaminated foods (usually raw) to ready-to-eat foods by direct contact, drip or indirect contact using a vehicle such as hands or a cloth.

How are bacteria transferred?

Hands are among the obvious culprits in transferring bacteria from raw to ready-to-eat food, but direct contact with **raw foods, dirty chopping boards, knives** and other cooking implements can also spread the contamination. Chopping boards, plates and knives that have been in contact with raw food need to be **carefully washed with warm water and detergent, then rinsed and thoroughly dried** before being used for ready to eat foods.

Incorrectly storing raw food in the fridge by allowing it to come into direct contact with ready to eat foods, or allowing raw meat juices to drip onto cooked foods, fruit and other ready to eat food, can also cause cross contamination.

Raw foods should always be treated as though they were contaminated.

Check-list for contamination control:

- Purchase from reliable suppliers
- Accept deliveries only if transported clean and at the good temperature
- Inspect deliveries immediately on arrival

- Store it immediately in good conditions
- Keep any refused item away from stored food
- Keep high risk food and ready-to-eat foods apart from raw foods
- Maintain scrupulous personal hygiene at all time
- Keep food covered – do not leave food lying around
- Keep the kitchen, equipment and utensils clean and in good conditions.
- Ensure all empty containers are clean and disinfected prior to filling with food.
- Keep cleaning materials (wiping materials and chemicals away from food)
- Remove waste food away from food
- Implement a pest management
- Control visitors and maintenance workers in high risk areas
- Inspect food areas and process frequently
- Ensure adequate thawing of foods, separate from other foods
- Make suitable provisions for cooling food prior to refrigeration

