

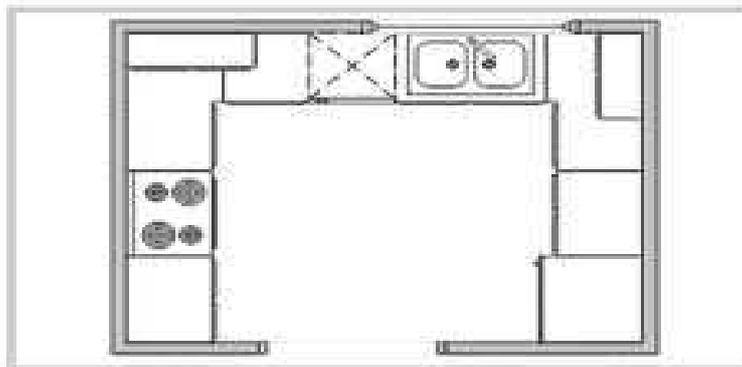
 West Lothian Council	Environmental Health		SUBJECT: Controlling cross contamination
	✓	Food Safety/Food Hygiene	NUMBER: FH30
Revised: 29/06/15		Health & Safety	
		Public Health	
Status: TRADE ADVICE Data label: Public		Pollution Control	
		Pest Control/Dog Warden	

Information Sheet FH30

Guidance on Controlling Cross Contamination

Food such as raw chicken, raw beef, raw fish and raw fruit and vegetables may contain harmful bacteria like *E-coli O157*. Cooking these foods to over 75°C kills the bacteria and makes the food safe to eat. Cross contamination is when the harmful bacteria in the raw foods are transferred onto foods which are ready to eat. You must ensure this does not happen in your kitchen. Cross contamination has been the cause of many food poisoning outbreaks and has resulted in deaths. The Food Standards Agency has issued guidance that you need to follow to make sure that cross contamination does not happen in your kitchen. You should consider the following.

PLAN YOUR KITCHEN



Think about your kitchen and how you operate it. The best way to prevent cross contamination is permanent physical separation where raw and ready to eat foods are kept apart and handled in separate parts of the kitchen.

To achieve permanent physical separation designate a specific area of the kitchen for raw food preparation. It is a good idea to use a sign stating 'Raw Food Only' so it is clear to everyone in the kitchen this area is to be used only for raw foods. Think carefully about the area you select for raw

preparation so that the flow of the kitchen operation is sensible and no ready to eat foods will pass through the raw preparation area.



In small kitchens it is not always practical to achieve permanent physical separation. In these circumstances temporary physical separation can be used. Temporary physical separation is where an area of the kitchen is used for raw preparation. Ready to eat foods are kept away from this area whilst this preparation is being carried out. Once the raw preparation has finished the area is cleaned and disinfected before the area is used for ready to eat foods.

EQUIPMENT

Use separate equipment for raw and ready to eat foods. Colour coding can help you with this. Keep the equipment (knives, chopping boards etc.) used for raw foods in the raw preparation area. Keep the equipment used for ready to eat foods away from the raw food preparation area.

Use separate refrigerators and freezers for raw and ready to eat food. If this is not possible store ready to eat foods on the upper shelves of the refrigerator or freezer and raw foods on the lower shelves. Always keep foods covered to prevent the risk of contamination.



Plastic containers are difficult to clean and disinfect. It is not possible to adequately disinfect containers using chemicals and therefore you should not use the same containers for storing raw and ready to eat foods even if you have cleaned them between uses. It is advisable to use different type or style of containers to ensure they do not get mixed up. It is permitted to use the same containers if you use adequate thermal disinfection between uses.

CLEANING AND DISINFECTION

The most effective method of disinfection is to use heat. Commercial dishwashers are effective as they use chemicals and heat to both clean and disinfect equipment. If you do not use a dishwasher you can use a double sink for cleaning and disinfection.



Four step cleaning method:

1. Clean equipment in sink with appropriate amount of detergent
2. Rinse in clean water
3. Disinfect in sink with appropriate amount of disinfectant for appropriate contact time
4. Rinse in clean water

You must keep your kitchen clean. Cleaning refers to the removal of dirt, debris and grease. A detergent and hot water is generally used for cleaning. Disinfection is the process where harmful bugs are killed. Disinfection should take place after cleaning. You must use chemicals that meet the British Standards –

BS EN 1276: 1997

BS EN 1276: 2009

BE EN 13697:2001

Check the labels or with the supplier of your chemicals to ensure they meet the relevant standards. A list of chemicals that comply with the standards is available at:

www.disinfectant-info.co.uk



Use separate cloths for the raw preparation area and other parts of the kitchen. This can be achieved by using single use only cloths and disposing of them after each clean or having colour coded cloths where different colours are used in the raw preparation area from the rest of the kitchen. Clean first using a detergent to remove the dirt that can be seen. Rinse with clean hot water. Then disinfect using an appropriate chemical to kill the bacteria that cannot be seen. You may need to rinse after this stage. Always follow the instructions provided with the cleaning chemicals including the correct dilution rate and contact time.

PERSONAL HYGIENE

The most common way for cross contamination to occur is by a person handling raw food and then handling ready to eat food. To prevent cross contamination you must wash your hands after handling raw foods and before handling ready to eat foods.

Wash your hands using the designated wash hand basin. Use liquid hand wash soap and warm running water. Always dry your hands after washing. Use the correct hand washing technique, shown below.

Washing hands effectively

Step 1:

Wet your hands thoroughly under warm running water and squirt liquid soap onto the palm of one hand.



Step 4:

Rub in between each of your fingers on both hands and round your thumbs, then your fingertips and nails.



Step 2:

Rub your hands together to make a lather.



Step 5:

Rinse off the soap with clean water.



Step 3:

Rub the palm of one hand along the back of the other and along the fingers. Then repeat with the other hand.



Step 6:

Dry hands thoroughly on a disposable towel. Turn off the tap with the towel and then throw the towel away.



If you use gloves or tongs, never use the same gloves or tongs for both raw and ready to eat foods. Remember gloves are not a replacement for hand washing. Always wear clean protective clothing when working in the kitchen.

MANAGEMENT SYSTEM AND DOCUMENTAION

It has been legal requirement since 2006 for all food businesses to have a documented food safety management system. Your cross contamination controls must be included this system.



The COOKSAFE system available from the food standards agency website:

<http://www.foodstandards.gov.scot/cooksafe>

COOKSAFE provides guidance on cross contamination controls and house rules that can assist you in the implementation of your food safety management system.

It is essential that everyone who works in the kitchen is aware of cross contamination and what they have to do to prevent cross contamination. Explain your controls clearly to kitchen staff and check they understand. Keep a written record of any training provided to staff.

MONITORING AND SUPERVISION

Remember if cross contamination occurs then a customer could eat food contaminated with *E coli* O157. This would cause serious illness and possible death. It is the responsibility of everyone in the kitchen to ensure this does not happen. Where cross contamination has or is likely to have occurred the contaminated food must be disposed of. Management must carry out appropriate supervision and monitoring of the food operations and take effective action where cross contamination controls have or are likely to have failed.

An outbreak of food poisoning from a business can result in the loss of reputation of the business, criminal prosecution with financial penalties or prison sentence and civil claims. These could result in the business being unable to continue its operations.



West Lothian Council participates in the food hygiene information scheme. All food businesses are subject to food hygiene inspections. After inspection most businesses will be awarded either a 'PASS' or 'IMPROVEMENT REQUIRED' certificate to display. The scheme provides customers with information on the hygiene standards in the business. Information is also available on the Food Standards Agency website:
<http://ratings.food.gov.uk/search-a-local-authority-area/en-GB/Scotland>

Food businesses that do not control cross contamination will be issued with an IMPROVEMENT REQUIRED.

Remember it is your responsibility to ensure that the food served to your customers is safe. If you would like help, or need any further advice, then please contact us on 01506 280000 or environmentalhealth@westlothian.gov.uk