

Food Act 2006

# Cross contamination

Cross contamination occurs when harmful bacteria or allergens spread to food from other food, surfaces, hands or equipment. This fact sheet provides information on how cross contamination of food can occur and provides advice about practices that can prevent it.

## Examples of cross contamination

- handling food without first washing your hands
- using the same knife or cutting board to cut both raw and ready-to-eat foods
- storing food uncovered
- storing raw food above ready-to-eat food
- using the hand wash basin to defrost or store food
- cutting unwashed fruits and vegetables
- using tea towels for multiple tasks in the kitchen such as wiping hands, covering food, placing under a cutting board and wiping food contact surfaces.

## Why is cross contamination a problem?

Cross contamination can cause food poisoning when bacteria are transferred onto food that is ready to eat. For example, if raw meat comes into contact with cooked chicken, the person eating the chicken will consume any bacteria passed from the raw meat.

## How do I prevent cross contamination?

Some ways to help prevent cross contamination include:

- using separate equipment and utensils for raw and ready-to-eat foods
- storing food covered in clean washable containers
- avoiding any unnecessary contact with food
- storing raw food on the bottom shelf of the fridge to prevent juices from raw food dripping onto ready-to-eat food
- storing cleaning chemicals and other cleaning equipment away from food
- regularly changing cleaning cloths, and do not use for multiple tasks in the kitchen
- ideally, allowing equipment and utensils to air dry after washing and sanitising
- frequently and thoroughly wash and dry your hands, especially before and after handling raw food.



### Further information

Contact your local government if you have any further questions. Contact details can be found at <http://www.dilgp.qld.gov.au/local-government-directory/> or the White Pages.