

Food Cross Contamination Information Sheet



MOUNT BARKER
DISTRICT COUNCIL



What is cross contamination?

Cross contamination is the transfer of bacteria, chemicals or toxins from one surface to another.

Cross contamination can occur during:

- Primary food production
- During harvest or slaughter
- Secondary food production
- Transportation of food
- Storage of food
- Distribution of food
- Food preparation

There are three main types of cross contamination:

1. Food to food

Raw, undercooked, or improperly washed food can harbor large amounts of bacteria.

Example: adding unwashed contaminated lettuce to a fresh salad can contaminate the ingredients.

2. Equipment to food

Bacteria can survive for long periods on surfaces like countertops, utensils, cutting boards, storage containers and food manufacturing equipment.

Example: using the same cutting board and knife to cut raw meat and vegetables, which can be harmful if the vegetables are then consumed raw.

3. People to food

Humans can easily transfer bacteria from their bodies or clothes to food at any time during food preparation.

Examples:

- Coughing into hand, then touching food and continuing to prepare a meal without washing hands in between.
- Using a mobile phone while cooking.
- Wiping hands with a dirty apron or towel after washing hands then cooking.

Who is at risk?

Anyone can be at risk of becoming sick from cross contamination. Certain groups including pregnant women, children, older adults and those with weakened immune systems are at the highest risk.

Practice good hygiene, wash and sanitise your equipment, and properly store and serve food to prevent cross contamination.

Enquiries can be made to the Environmental Health Team.

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