

PREVENTING CROSS-CONTAMINATION DURING PREPARATION AND COOKING



Objective: To review with your employees the proper procedures to follow to prevent cross-contamination during preparation and cooking.

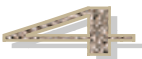
Microorganisms can move easily in a kitchen. They can attach themselves to almost anything they contact, including prep tables, equipment, utensils, cutting boards, dish towels, sponges, hands, or other foods. Begin discussion by explaining to employees that cross-contamination can start at almost any point in an operation. When they know what it is and how it happens, cross-contamination is fairly simple to prevent. Prevention starts with creating physical or procedural barriers between food products.



- *Review with your employees the barriers to cross-contamination during preparation of food:*
- ♣ Prepare raw meats, fish, and poultry in separate areas from produce or cooked and ready-to-eat foods. If separate areas are not possible, separate preparation by time.
 - ♣ Assign specific equipment to each type of food product. Color coded utensils are useful for doing this.
 - ♣ Use specific containers for each type of food product. Clearly label containers with the intended contents.
 - ♣ Clean and sanitize all work surfaces, equipment, and utensils after each task. As was learned in week two, wiping surfaces isn't enough – they must be thoroughly cleaned and sanitized after each task.
 - ♣ Cloths or towels used for wiping food spills must not be used for any other purpose. Use disposable or color-coded towels to prevent cross-contamination.
 - ♣ Make sure employees watch what they touch after handling raw animal foods and remind them to practice good personal hygiene.



- *Review with your employees the barriers to cross-contamination during cooking:*
- ♣ Clean and sanitize thermometer stems after each use.
 - ♣ Use cleaned and sanitized utensils to handle food after cooking. Never reuse utensils that have contacted raw animal foods to handle cooked foods.
 - ♣ Taste foods correctly. Ladle a small amount into a small dish. Taste the food with a cleaned and sanitized or single-use spoon, then remove the dish and spoon from the area to be cleaned and sanitized.



Objective: To reinforce the creation of physical or procedural barriers during preparation and cooking.

Step 1: Create a food-safety team from a group of your employees. Ideally all shifts should and work areas should be represented.

Step 2: Assign members of the team to study different work areas in your operation (cold prep, grill, stove, oven, bakery, etc.) and ask them to develop cross-contamination barriers for those areas.

Step 3: After receiving the check-lists, edit them for consistency and readability. Review all lists with the teams. Suggest ways to make them colorful or color-coded, and translate them into appropriate languages.

Step 4: Have the lists professionally printed and laminated, and post them in the appropriate work areas for easy reference.