

Safe method:

## Cloths

**Cloths can be one of the top causes of cross-contamination in the kitchen. It is essential to use them safely to prevent bacteria from spreading.**



### Safety point

Use single-use cloths wherever possible, and throw them away after each task.

Always use a new or freshly cleaned cloth to wipe work surfaces, equipment or utensils that will be used with ready-to-eat food.

Take away re-usable cloths for thorough washing after using them with raw meat/poultry, eggs or raw vegetables – and surfaces that have touched these foods.

If using re-usable cloths, make sure they are thoroughly washed, disinfected and dried between tasks (not just when they look dirty).

Ideally, wash cloths in a washing machine on a hot cycle.

If you wash and disinfect cloths by hand, make sure all the food and dirt has been removed before you disinfect them. Use hot water to disinfect the cloths.

### Why?

This will make sure that any bacteria picked up by the cloth will not be spread.

It is especially important to protect ready-to-eat food from bacteria. This is because the food will not be cooked, so any bacteria on the food will not be killed.

Raw meat/poultry and eggs are more likely to contain harmful bacteria than other foods. The soil on vegetables can also contain harmful bacteria.

Using dirty cloths can spread bacteria very easily.




A hot wash cycle will clean the cloths thoroughly and kill bacteria (disinfect).

If food or dirt is still on the cloths, this will prevent the disinfection process from being effective, so harmful bacteria might not be killed.

### How do you do this?

How do you clean re-usable cloths?

## Different cloths for different jobs

Jobs	The best cloth for the job	Do you do this?	If not, what do you do?
Holding hot items (e.g. oven trays) – use tea towel or chef's cloth		Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	
Washing up dishes – use a dish cloth		Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	
Use single-use cloths or paper towels for the following jobs:			
Wiping surfaces		Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	
Mopping up spills		Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	
Wiping hands		Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	
Wiping sides of dishes before serving		Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	
Drying ingredients		Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	

## What to do if things go wrong

- If you notice dirty cloths in the kitchen, remove them for cleaning immediately or throw them away.
- If you think your staff have used a dirty cloth, wash, disinfect and dry any equipment, work surfaces or utensils it has touched.

## How to stop this happening again

- Consider using single-use cloths if you are not using them already.
- Increase your supply of single-use/clean cloths.
- Train staff again on this safe method.
- Improve supervision.

## Write down what went wrong and what you did about it in your diary.

### Manage it

Have a special place in the kitchen for dirty re-usable cloths.

### Why?

This is to prevent them being re-used before they have been washed.

### How do you do this?

Where do staff put dirty re-usable cloths?

Always keep a good supply of single-use/clean cloths in your kitchen.

Staff are more likely to use clean cloths if plenty are available.

Where do you keep new/clean cloths?