

Safe method:



# Ready-to-eat foods

It is important to handle ready-to-eat foods safely to protect them from harmful bacteria.



## What are ready-to-eat foods?

Ready-to-eat foods are foods that will not be cooked or reheated before serving. These include salads, cooked meats such as ham, desserts, sandwiches, cheese and foods that you have cooked in advance to serve cold.

Safety point	Why?	How do you do this?
<p>To protect foods from harmful bacteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• keep ready-to-eat foods separate from raw meat/poultry and eggs</li><li>• make sure work surfaces, chopping boards, knives etc. are clean (and disinfected if you have prepared raw meat/poultry)</li><li>• keep ready-to-eat foods covered</li></ul>	<p>This is to prevent harmful bacteria getting onto the foods. This is especially important for ready-to-eat foods because they will not be cooked or reheated before serving.</p> 	<p>List the types of ready-to-eat food you use:</p> <div style="border: 1px solid #ccc; height: 200px;"></div>
<p>Follow the manufacturer's instructions on how to store and prepare the food, if these are available.</p>	<p>The manufacturer's instructions are designed to keep the food safe.</p>	<p>Are you confident that you do this for all ready-to-eat foods where instructions are available? Yes <input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>When preparing vegetables and salad ingredients:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• peel, trim, or remove the outer parts, as appropriate</li><li>• wash them thoroughly in clean drinking-quality water</li></ul> <p>If you have prepared vegetables that have dirt or soil on the outside, clean chopping boards and work surfaces before preparing other foods.</p>	<p>The dirt on vegetables and salad ingredients can contain harmful bacteria. Peeling and washing helps to remove the dirt.</p> 	<p>Do you do this? Yes <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If not, what do you do?</p> <div style="border: 1px solid #ccc; height: 145px;"></div>

Safety point	Why?	How do you do this?
<p>Make sure you keep ready-to-eat foods cold enough. See 'Chilled storage and displaying chilled food' in the Chilling section.</p> <p>Do not use ready-to-eat foods after the 'use by' date, if there is one.</p> <p>For food you have prepared, or removed from its original packaging, it is a good idea to have a method of labelling to keep track of when food should be used or thrown away.</p>	<p>If these types of food are not kept cold enough, harmful bacteria could grow.</p> <p>You should never use food that has passed its 'use by' date because it might not be safe to eat.</p>	<p>Do you do this? Yes <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If not, what do you do?</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 180px; width: 100%;"></div>
<p>If you slice cooked meat:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• make sure you follow the manufacturer's instructions when you clean the slicer</li> <li>• avoid handling the meat as much as possible – it is a good idea to use clean tongs or slice meat straight onto a plate</li> </ul>	<p>Meat slicers need careful cleaning and disinfecting to prevent dirt building up and to stop harmful bacteria growing, in particular on the slicing blade.</p> <p>Hands can easily spread harmful bacteria onto food.</p>	<p>Are staff trained how to clean the meat slicer properly, or supervised?</p> <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p>

### What to do if things go wrong

- If you think that a food delivery has not been handled safely, reject the delivery.
- If ready-to-eat vegetables or salad ingredients have not been washed properly, wash them following the advice on the front of this sheet and clean any work surfaces etc. they have touched.
- If ready-to-eat food has been prepared on a work surface or with a knife that has been used for raw meat/poultry or eggs, throw the food away.
- If ready-to-eat food has not been chilled safely, throw the food away.

### How to stop this happening again

- If you do not think a supplier handles food safely, consider changing to a new supplier.
- Review the way you receive deliveries.
- Review the way you store and prepare ready-to-eat foods.
- Train staff again on this safe method.
- Improve staff supervision.


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