

Safe method:

Separating foods

Separating raw and ready-to-eat foods is essential to prevent harmful bacteria from spreading.



Safety point

Delivery

Plan delivery times so that, if possible, raw meat/poultry arrive at different times to other foods.

Unload deliveries in a clean, separate area. Remove outer packaging and throw it away. Before you do this, make a note of any cooking instructions or ingredient information, if you need to. Sometimes the information is only on the outer packaging.

Why?

This helps to prevent harmful bacteria spreading from raw meat/poultry to other foods.

This will prevent dirty outer packaging or leaks from deliveries from spreading bacteria.

Packaging can also contain pests.

How do you do this?

When do deliveries come?

Make a note in your diary.

Defrosting

Keep foods that are defrosting in the fridge in a covered container, below ready-to-eat foods, or in a separate area of the kitchen away from other foods.

(See the 'Defrosting' method in the Chilling section.)



When foods are defrosting, the liquid that comes out can contain harmful bacteria, which could spread to other foods.

Where do you defrost foods?

Storage

Store raw and ready-to-eat foods separately. If they are in the same fridge, store raw meat/poultry below ready-to-eat foods.

Cover cooked foods and other ready-to-eat foods.

This helps to prevent harmful bacteria spreading from raw foods to ready-to-eat foods.



How do you make sure raw and ready-to-eat foods are stored separately?

Safety point

Preparation

Prepare raw meat/poultry and other foods in different areas. If this is not possible, separate by preparing them at different times and clean thoroughly between tasks.

Never use the same chopping board or knives for preparing raw meat/poultry and for ready-to-eat food (unless they have been thoroughly cleaned and disinfected in between).

Why?

This helps to prevent harmful bacteria spreading from one food to another.

Harmful bacteria from raw meat/poultry can spread from chopping boards and knives to other foods.



How do you do this?

How do you separate raw meat/poultry and other foods during preparation?

Cooking e.g. grill, barbecue

When you add raw meat products, make sure they do not touch or drip onto the food already cooking.

Bacteria could spread from the raw meat to the other food and stop it being safe to eat.

How do you keep raw meat separate from food already cooking?

Think twice!

Covering foods

It is important to keep food covered to help protect it from harmful bacteria. This is especially important for cooked food and other ready-to-eat food. Always use containers or bags that have been designed to store food (food grade). Suggested food coverings include kitchen foil, cling film, plastic boxes with lids or freezer bags. Do not store food in opened tins.

When you are covering food:

- Check the manufacturer's instructions to see if the covering is suitable for what you are using it for.
- Always make sure that the food is properly covered.
- Take care not to let the covering fall into foods.
- Never re-use foil, cling film or freezer bags.
- Make sure that plastic boxes are washed, disinfected and dried between uses.

What to do if things go wrong

- If you think that ready-to-eat food has not been kept separate from raw meat/poultry throw away the food.
- If equipment/surfaces/utensils have been touched by raw meat/poultry wash, disinfect and dry them to prevent harmful bacteria from spreading.

How to stop this happening again

- Re-organise delivery times, storage and food preparation to make it easier to keep food separate.
- Make sure you have enough storage space and it is well organised.
- Train staff again on this safe method.
- Improve staff supervision.



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

