

# E. coli cross-contamination guidance

How to reduce the risk of E. coli O157 cross-contamination in your business.

This guide helps businesses comply with food hygiene legislation and gives advice on good practice. It focuses on E. coli but the steps taken to avoid cross contamination will also help control other foodborne bacteria.

[E. coli cross contamination guidance](#) (2.02 MB)

## Preventing contamination

Businesses must ensure that work areas, surfaces and equipment used for raw and ready to eat food are adequately separated.

This can be done by separating raw and ready to eat food in separate:

- rooms, staff, utensils and equipment
- areas, staff, utensils and equipment

If this is not possible then you can clean and disinfect areas that are used for both raw and ready to eat foods. This method carries the most risk and you must follow specific legal requirements to ensure that food is safe.

## Equipment

Complex equipment such as vacuum packing machines, slicers and mincers shouldn't be used for both raw and ready to eat food during a normal business day.

If you are changing the use of the machine from raw to ready to eat foods, the machines need to be dismantled and all surfaces cleaned and disinfected.

This guide gives further information about the use of complex equipment. There is a separate guide for re-commissioning vacuum packers.

[Guidelines for re-commissioning vacuum packers](#) (121.33 KB)

If you can show that temperature probes, mixers and weighing scales, can be effectively disinfected between uses, they can be used for both food types.

[Separate use of complex equipment for small businesses](#) (799.39 KB)

## Personal hygiene

Staff must wash hands using a recognised technique.

Anti-bacterial hand gels must not be used to replace handwashing.

## Disinfection

If you are using a chemical disinfectant or sanitiser, these must meet officially recognised

standards and should be used as instructed by the manufacturer.

More information about the standards disinfectants and sanitisers must meet and how to use them effectively are in this guide.

## **Further information**

[E. coli O157 Cross-contamination for caterers](#) (305.61 KB)

[Testing of food businesses' alternative controls report](#) (4.19 MB)