

KITCHEN HYGIENE

Imagine for a minute that you're making chicken and salad for dinner. If you chop your chicken up on a board before you cook it, and then use the same knife and board to prepare your salad, the salad will be contaminated with bacteria from the uncooked chicken. This is called 'cross-contamination' and here are the golden rules for avoiding it:

- **After preparing raw meat or fish** on a chopping board, give the board a good scrub in really hot water to kill the bacteria, with a little washing-up liquid to get rid of any grease.

Wash the knife and your hands thoroughly.

- **Wash your vegetables and fresh herbs** before you use them, even if they don't look dirty.

Peel any vegetables that need peeling over the sink and give them a good rinse before you use them.

- **Store raw meat and fish** on the bottom shelf of your fridge, and food that is ready to be eaten on the shelves above. This means that raw foods can't drip on to cooked foods and cross-contaminate them. If you handle raw eggs, give your hands a good wash afterwards.

- **Serve cooked food with clean implements** that haven't touched anything raw or dirty. It's a scary thing to see the same tongs that put raw chicken on the barbecue one minute lift the cooked chicken off a few minutes later!

- **Wash your hands** after touching anything that might have bacteria on it, like the dustbin or the dog, and never forget to wash your hands after going to the loo!

- **Keep your work surfaces clean and clutter free.** Wipe everything down regularly with antibacterial kitchen spray and wash your kitchen cloth or spongy scourer in hot soapy water, as it can harbour germs too.

Here are some other tips to keep you clean and safe in the kitchen:

- Preparing food in advance is fine but remember to store it in the fridge until you're ready to serve it.
- When you're putting things in the fridge, get yourself some Tupperware so things are nicely sealed and your food is protected.
- It's important to keep not just your surfaces clean, but also your dishwasher and sink.
- Clear out your fridge regularly and keep the shelves nice and clean.
- Clean the bin and bin area on a regular basis.
- Keep your condiment bottles clean by giving them a quick wipe before putting them back in your fridge or cupboard.
- It's a good idea to remove jewellery, wear a clean apron and roll up your sleeves before you start preparing food.
- If you've got long hair, then tie it back before you start cooking and try not to touch your hair or face as you go.