Infographic: Cross Contamination in the Workplace

CROSS CONTAMINATION IN THE WORKPLACE

The transferring of germs between people, food and objects causes cross contamination and can lead to minor or serious illnesses. Wherever you work, you have a duty to others to cut out cross contamination, and those tasked with cleaning have the same responsibility.

CROSS CONTAMINATION STATISTICS

- 27.3% of cloths still have e-coli present on them after rinsing, while listeria is present on 13.5% of cloths after rinsing.
- E-coli can last for up to **24 hours on kitchen surfaces.**
- E-coli can last for up to **24 hours on food packaging** if raw meats and ready-to-eat foods are stored or stored together.

98% of kitchen surfaces are **not thoroughly washed after food preparation**, while **43%** are **contaminated with raw meat bacteria** after food is prepared on them.

2 out of 3 people **don't wash chopping boards** after slicing raw chicken on them.

4 out of 5 people **don't wash their hands thoroughly** after handling raw meat such as mince and chicken.

Approximately **70%** of people **neglect to thoroughly wash a knife** used for preparing raw meat before then using it to cut salad vegetables.

Source: Safefood

WHERE IS IT LIKELY TO OCCUR?

Bathrooms

Pubs, restaurants & canteens

Healthcare facilities

Education & day care centres



DEON LUBBE Technical hygiene expert with Rentokil Initial

"People constantly touch surfaces that they don't really need to touch, in addition to those they have to touch, like door handles. Very often, due to our habits, we touch these surfaces in the same place as most other people in shared spaces. Within seconds the entire workplace could be contaminated or you could pass bacteria to a colleague through a friendly handshake."

The person quoted is in no way affiliated with The Cleaning Services Group.

HOW CAN IT OCCUR?

- Food is stored uncovered
- Surgical equipment not being properly sterilised after use
- Wiping surfaces or utensils with cleaning equipment that has not been properly washed
- Fingers touching computer keyboards or touchscreens that contain hidden bacteria
- Touching soft surfaces (e.g. seat cushions) that contain bacteria
- Hands touching food, fluids, utensils or surfaces without being properly washed first
- Utensils or surfaces are not properly washed
- Insects or rodents touch food
- Raw and cooked foods are stored together or touch each other

NEGATIVE EFFECTS OF CROSS CONTAMINATION



- People can easily become sick, even if they're only very briefly on the premises.
- Companies lose a huge amount of money every year through lost productivity resulting from enforced sick leave.
- Companies' reputations could be affected if people become sick from cross contamination on their premises.
- Employees could become unhappy with working in a place where cross contamination exists, especially if it's a frequent occurrence.
- Companies could have legal action taken against them if a person becomes sick from cross contamination on their premises.

HOW TO PREVENT CROSS CONTAMINATION

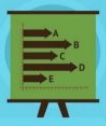


USE MICROFIBRE CLOTHS & MOPS

- Cloths and mops with synthetic microfibre materials capture 99% of dirt, 3 times more than cotton fibre alternatives.
- As microfibre materials are designed to absorb and retain bacteria, dirt and other contaminants, you're not spreading these from one surface to another like you would by using ineffective cotton cloths.

EDUCATION & TRAINING

- Perhaps the best way to eliminate cross contamination in the workplace is to educate staff fully on the subject, as many such instances arise from people being unaware that they are causing cross contamination.
- Management should treat cross contamination training as essential, educating all staff about the matter and informing them of company policies.
- This training shouldn't just be a one-off beginner's tutorial, either; ongoing assessment is crucial so the staff don't slip into bad habits which could cause cross contamination.





KEEP TOOLS, CHEMICALS & EQUIPMENT SEPARATED

- One of the most common causes of cross contamination is the mixing of tools and equipment with chemicals that will cause a reaction when placed together.
- If cleaning materials are stocked on a company's premises, the storage area must be clean and very organised, e.g. a mop used for cleaning floors should be kept separate from one that was used for cleaning the kitchen or a food service area.
- Also, chemicals used for specific duties should not, in any circumstance, be mixed with chemicals designated for other applications.
- Implementing a colour-coded system for pairing specific items together and keeping others separate is an effective way of reducing cross contamination.

REFERENCES

www.safefood.eu/Food-Safety/Cross-Contamination.aspx
www.slathaki.com/blog/4-cross-contamination-from-your-cleaning-company-making-you-sick
www.wavelengnsw.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0009/29918/Cross_Contamination_-_Fact_Sheet_with_logo.pdf
otopmedical.com/10-sources-of-cross-contamination-in-hospitals
biogrillac.co.za/an-interview-with-a-technical-hygiene-expert
www.jbcleaning.com/cleaning-materials-cross-contamination

csg national cleaning specialist

cleaningservicesgroup.co.uk