



*January*  
**2023**



## *Bite-Sized Food Safety*

**Food safety resources  
for front-line managers  
to train food workers**

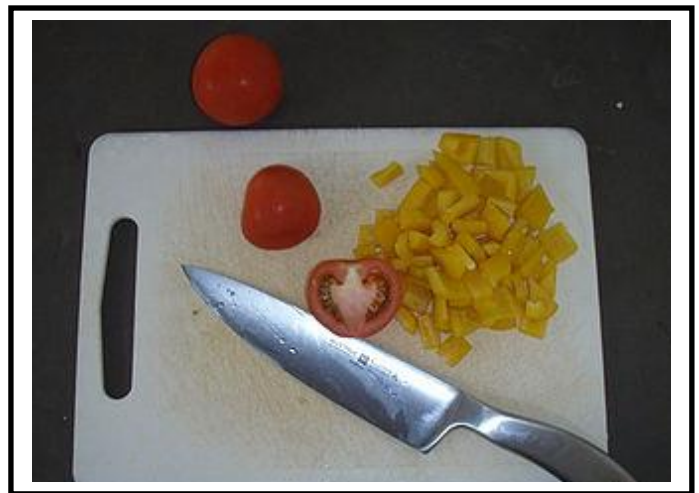
### **Cutting Boards and Cross-Contamination**

**ASK:** What is cross-contamination?

**ANSWER:** Cross contamination is when disease-causing bacteria or viruses are transferred to food by contact with equipment, hands, or residue of another food.

**ASK:** How does cross-contamination occur?

**ANSWER:** Cross-contamination is most frequently caused by unwashed cutting boards, hands, or kitchen tools like knives or tongs.



**ASK:** When should cutting boards be cleaned?

**ANSWER:** Cutting boards must be cleaned when they become excessively soiled, when changing from one type of food product to another, after 4 hours of use, and when you are finished using them.

**ASK:** How should cutting boards be cleaned?

**ANSWER:** Cutting boards must be washed, rinsed, and sanitized just like any other kitchenware. Plastic cutting boards can be cleaned in a mechanical dishwasher. To remove stains from cutting boards, they can be scrubbed with a mixture of equal parts of baking soda, salt, and water or soaked in a bleach water solution.



**ASK:** Why are cutting boards often different colors?

**ANSWER:** Cutting boards are often color coded so that different types of food are cut on different cutting boards. This helps prevent cross-contamination.

**ASK:** What cutting board should be used to prepare an order for a person with food allergies?

**ANSWER:** A separate clean cutting board and knife should be used for preparing food for each person with food allergies. Purple cutting boards are often designated for preparing food for persons with food allergies.



Photo Credit: San Jamar



**ASK:** Are wooden or plastic cutting boards better?

**ANSWER:** Both plastic and wooden cutting boards may become cut or grooved. Both can harbor harmful bacteria in these cuts and grooves and require regular cleaning. Some people prefer plastic cutting boards because they are not damaged when run through a dishwasher. Others prefer wooden cutting boards because they don't dull chefs' knives as much.

**ASK:** What types of wood are acceptable for use for cutting boards?

**ANSWER:** Wooden cutting boards must be made of hard maple or an equivalently hard, close-grained wood.

**ASK:** How often should cutting boards be replaced?

**ANSWER:** Cutting boards should be replaced or reconditioned when they become scratched or grooved. The surface of wood and plastic cutting boards can sometimes be sanded to restore a smooth surface.



**ASK:** When should knives be cleaned?

**ANSWER:** Knives should be cleaned whenever you begin cutting a different food product, after four hours of use, and before being stored.

**ASK:** How should knives be cleaned?

**ANSWER:** Knives should be washed, rinsed, and sanitized just like any other kitchenware. Washing them separately may prevent injuries.



**ASK:** How should clean knives be stored?

**ANSWER:** Knives should be stored in a proper knife holder that can be easily cleaned. The knife holder may be a magnetic strip or a slotted metal knife holder made so that it can be easily cleaned.

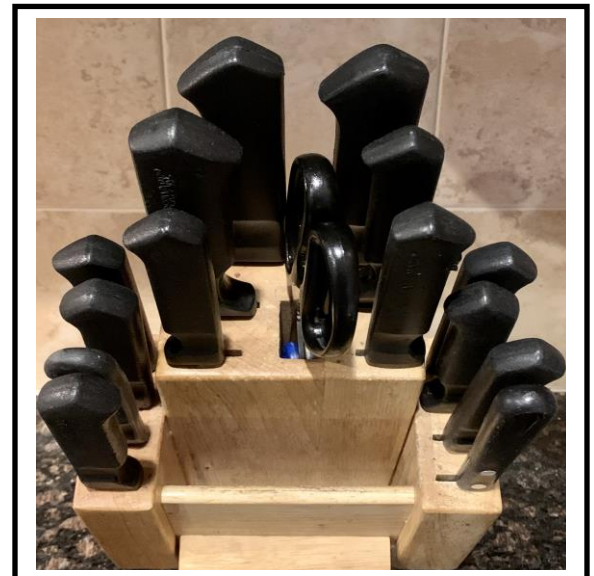
**ASK:** Can knives be stored between two pieces of equipment or tabletops?

**ANSWER:** No. The slot between two pieces of equipment or two work tables can't be easily cleaned without moving the equipment or tables. All kinds of food debris and dirt accumulates in these crevices.

**ASK:** Can wooden knife storage blocks be used?

**ANSWER:** Wooden knife storage blocks are not approved because they can't be disassembled for cleaning. Food debris and dirt accumulates in the slots.

**Closing Thought: Cross contamination moves germs from one product or surface to another. Using separate knives and cutting boards for different foods and washing, rinsing, and sanitizing them regularly prevents foodborne illness.**



# Color-Coded Cutting Boards

Prevent Cross-Contamination



Illustration above courtesy of San Jamar

## **Cutting Boards: Preventing Cross-Contamination and Bacterial Growth**

- 1. Use different cutting boards and knives for different types of food to prevent cross-contamination (color coding will help you tell the cutting boards apart)**
- 2. Wash, rinse, and sanitize cutting boards and knives regularly (at least every 4 hours) when in use**
- 3. Use a separate clean cutting board for preparing food for each person with food allergies**
- 4. Replace or recondition cutting boards when they become cut or grooved**