

Meat Slicers



What are the food safety concerns with meat slicers?

In 2008, an outbreak of foodborne illness caused by *Listeria* bacteria claimed the lives of 20 people. The outbreak resulted in one of the largest recalls of food products in Canadian history. The investigation traced the bacteria to meat slicing equipment.

Other disease-causing bacteria can also grow on equipment and utensils when they are not properly cleaned and sanitized. *Listeria* bacteria are particularly difficult to control because they multiply in cold temperatures, where other bacteria do not.

How can I prevent the spread of these bacteria?

Meat slicers used at room temperature should be **cleaned** and **sanitized** at least every four hours in order to prevent the growth of disease-causing bacteria like *Listeria*.

Cleaning is the removal of visible food debris, grease and other materials. This may require the use of physical energy (scrubbing), heat or chemicals.

To sanitize means to treat by a process in which bacteria are destroyed to a safe level. This is done with chemicals meant for use around food, or with heat (hot water at 77°C or 171°F).

What are the steps for cleaning and sanitizing meat slicers?

Meat slicers are dangerous machines to use and to clean. Always follow your workplace safety procedures when using or cleaning equipment and utensils, and when working with chemical sanitizers. The following suggested steps are not meant to replace the manufacturer's or your workplace's approved policies and procedures.

1. Unplug machine (use a lockout box where necessary)
2. Set blade control at zero
3. Wear safety gloves when cleaning blade
4. Remove excess food waste by wiping or pre-rinsing
5. Disassemble machine
6. Use hot detergent solution to clean machine surfaces
7. Rinse to remove loose food waste, grease and detergent
8. Sanitize machine surfaces with a 45°C (113°F) solution of:
 - chlorine (100 to 200 mg/L; or 4 to 8 mL of 5.25% bleach per litre of water)
 - quaternary ammonium (up to 200 mg/L), OR
 - iodine (up to 25 mg/L).(Follow the sanitizer directions for mixing.)
9. Allow to air dry, if possible. Otherwise use clean paper towels.
10. Reassemble machine and cover when not in use.

Simple Food Safety Tips

Clean

- Wash your hands frequently with soap and warm water:
 - before - handling food or eating
 - after - handling raw meats, using the toilet, touching pets and animals, changing diapers
 - Wash counters, utensils, cutting boards, and other surfaces after they come into contact with raw meat.
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Cook

- Cook all meats, poultry, and eggs to a proper internal temperature, as listed in the “Food Retail and Food Services Code”.
 - Keep all hot foods at 60°C (140°F) or more, to prevent the growth of bacteria.
 - Use a kitchen thermometer to check cooking and storage temperatures.
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Chill

- Chill all leftovers promptly to keep them out of room temperature.
 - Refrigerate all perishable foods at 4°C (40°F) or less, to prevent the growth of bacteria.
 - Thaw frozen foods in a refrigerator, cold water, or a microwave oven, not at room temperature.
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Separate

- Use separate cutting boards for raw meats, and raw fruits and vegetables.
 - Store raw meats below ready-to-eat foods, on lower refrigerator shelves, to prevent dripping.
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Where can I find out more?

If you have any questions about food safety, please do not hesitate to contact one of the departments or agencies below.



Department of Health and Community Services
Department of Government Services
Department of Natural Resources
Regional Health Authorities

March 2009

Food Safety Awareness