

The correct use of cutting and serving boards

Wooden and plastic cutting and serving boards are safe to use in the kitchen. However, as with any surface that comes into contact with food, cleanliness and maintenance are key to preventing microbial cross-contamination.

Avoid cross-contamination

Always avoid cutting ready-to-eat food, such as bread or salad, on a board that has been used to trim raw meat, poultry and seafood without washing and sanitising the board first.

To wash and sanitise a board properly, pay attention to any grooves, scratches, gauges and cuts.

Food should not be prepared or served on boards with deep gouges and cuts because of the risk of cross-contamination from hidden bacteria and viruses. These lacerations can cause bacteria to become trapped and cross-contaminate food.

If cutting or serving boards cannot be effectively cleaned and sanitised because of damage, they should be replaced with new boards.

Cleaning and protecting boards

Boards used to prepare food must be washed with hot soapy water and rinsed with clean water before being air dried, or patted dry with clean paper towels. Following the cleaning process, both wooden and plastic boards can then be sanitised using chlorine bleach.

Further advice is in the fact sheet [Cleaning and sanitising in retail food businesses](#) (PDF, 406KB).

Ideally, wooden cutting boards should have a smooth, hard surface and rounded corners that will not chip or crack. They should be dense enough to resist slice marks that harbour bacteria and be easy to clean. It may be worthwhile to use an oil or wax treatment for the wooden board to prevent water absorption, mould growth and germs, and to stop food particles becoming lodged on the surface.

Replacement boards

All cutting boards should be replaced periodically due to inevitable wear or, as soon as they become too worn or develop hard-to-clean grooves. If ever in doubt about the board's condition, it's best to throw it out.

More information

- Visit foodauthority.nsw.gov.au
- Email the Food Authority helpline at food.contact@dpi.nsw.gov.au
- Phone the Food Authority helpline on 1300 552 406.