



Step 14 - Slicing ready to eat food

Summary

Meat slicers need careful cleaning and disinfecting to prevent dirt building up and to stop harmful bacteria growing, in particular on the slicing blade.

There is significant potential for re-contamination of food through contamination from slicing machine. There is also significant potential for multiplication of bacteria, germination of spores and subsequent toxin production if prolonged time at ambient temperature is allowed during the process.

What could happen?

The food is not going to be cooked again, and so if the food gets contaminated or made unsafe at this stage of production, then there is no further treatment which it will go through in order to ensure that it is safe to eat.

Procedure

- **Only the slicing machine which is designated for cooked food** should be used – this ensures compliance with legislation relating to physical separation of complex machinery of raw and cooked machines used in a kitchen.
- Cooked food should only be above 8°C for a maximum of 2 hours, this ensures adequate temperature for the food, and should prevent opportunity for the food to develop bacteria which would lead to it becoming unsafe to eat.
- The slicer should be cleaned & disinfected or double sanitised (two-stage process) using approved chemicals which meet BS EN 1276:1997 or BS EN 13697:20001 or equivalent. This will ensure that equipment is sufficiently clean and safe for use. It is essential that chemicals are allowed the sufficient 'contact time' in order for them to 'destroy' any harmful bacteria or remove any allergens which may be present on the machine before use.
- All team members should look to minimise handling of ready to eat food, as this will reduce the opportunity for cross contamination.
- As this is ready-to-eat food, and it is not likely to be cooked again, it is essential to ensure that the food is prevented from contamination.

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Hazard

- Contamination with pathogens, allergens or chemicals.
- Multiplication of pathogens & formation of toxins.
- Contamination with chemicals or foreign bodies.

Controls

- Equipment should be sufficiently cleaned and maintained in a suitable condition. This would involve sufficient double sanitising of approved sanitizers in order to ensure safety of the equipment.
- Minimise handling of raw food.
- **Use only 'Cooked' meat slicer.**
- Minimise the time of meat, poultry, fish, dairy products at room temperature to 60 minutes.
- Slicer to be cleaned & disinfected or double sanitised (two-stage process) using approved chemicals which meet BS EN 1276:1997 or BS EN 13697:20001 or equivalent and especially after slicing foods that contain allergens.
- Minimise handling of ready to eat food.

Critical limits

- Food is only above 8°C for maximum of 2 hours.
- **Only dedicated ready to eat slicing machine to be used.**

Checks & Records

- Check time that food is at ambient temperature.
- Inspection before start of work.
- Check that the correct procedure for washing produce is followed.
- Check time out of ambient.
- Follow cleaning schedule.

Corrective action

- Contact Head Chef.
- Reject product if product not going to be thoroughly cooked prior to consumption or if potentially contaminated by allergens.
- Replace/repair equipment/damaged surfaces.
- Discard raw meat/poultry/fish/dairy at room temperature for 2 hours.