Preventing Kitchen Cross-Contamination

This playbook outlines the essential steps for preventing cross-contamination in the kitchen, focusing on the separation of raw and cooked foods and detailing proper storage methods to ensure food safety.

Step 1: **Clean Hands**

Start by thoroughly washing your hands with warm water and soap for at least 20 seconds. Hand hygiene is the first line of defense in preventing cross-contamination.

Step 2: **Separate Utensils**

Use separate chopping boards, knives, and utensils for raw meat, poultry, and seafood to avoid transferring harmful bacteria to ready-to-eat foods.

Step 3: **Proper Storage**

Store raw meat, poultry, and seafood on the bottom shelf of the refrigerator, ensuring they do not drip onto other foods. Use containers to prevent spills and leaks.

Step 4: **Cooked Food Handling**

Handle cooked foods with clean utensils and plates, separate from those used for raw ingredients. This helps prevent the reintroduction of bacteria to cooked foods.

Step 5: **Maintain Cleanliness**

Regularly sanitize kitchen surfaces, cutting boards, and equipment with a proper cleaning solution to remove bacteria that could cause cross-contamination.

General Notes

Correct Refrigeration

Make sure your refrigerator is set at the correct temperature, at or below 40°F (4°C), to inhibit bacterial growth on perishable foods.

Label and Date

Always label and date all stored foods, especially raw meats and leftovers, to ensure they are consumed or discarded within a safe timeframe.

Safe Thawing

Thaw frozen meats in the refrigerator or using the microwave's 'defrost' setting, never on the counter, to limit bacterial growth.