

# Preventing Cross-Contamination During Storage

## Fact Sheet

When disease-causing microorganisms are transferred from one food or surface to another, carried by utensils, hands or other foods, cross-contamination has occurred. If you are not careful, it can happen very easily when storing food in your establishment. For example, cross-contamination can take place when raw food (like chicken) is allowed to touch or drip onto prepared or ready-to-eat food (like lettuce), or when food is stored in a container that has not been properly cleaned and sanitized. It can occur in many other ways as well.

**To prevent cross-contamination when storing food, you should do the following:**

**Store food in designated storage areas.**

To prevent possible contamination, keep food away from dishwashing areas, garbage rooms, restrooms, and furnace rooms. Never store food near chemicals or cleaning supplies, and keep it out from under stairways and pipes.



**Store food in proper containers.** If food is removed from its original package, put it in a clean, sanitized container and cover it. The new container must be labeled with the name of the food and the original use-by or expiration date.

**Store raw meat, poultry, and fish separately from prepared and ready-to-eat food.** If these items cannot be stored separately, store them *below* prepared or ready-to-eat food. Raw meat, poultry and fish should be stored in the following top-to-bottom order in the refrigerator: whole fish, whole cuts of beef and pork, ground meats and fish, and whole and ground poultry.

**Wrap food properly before storing it.** Leaving food uncovered can lead to cross-contamination. Cover food with tight-fitting plastic wrap or aluminum foil.

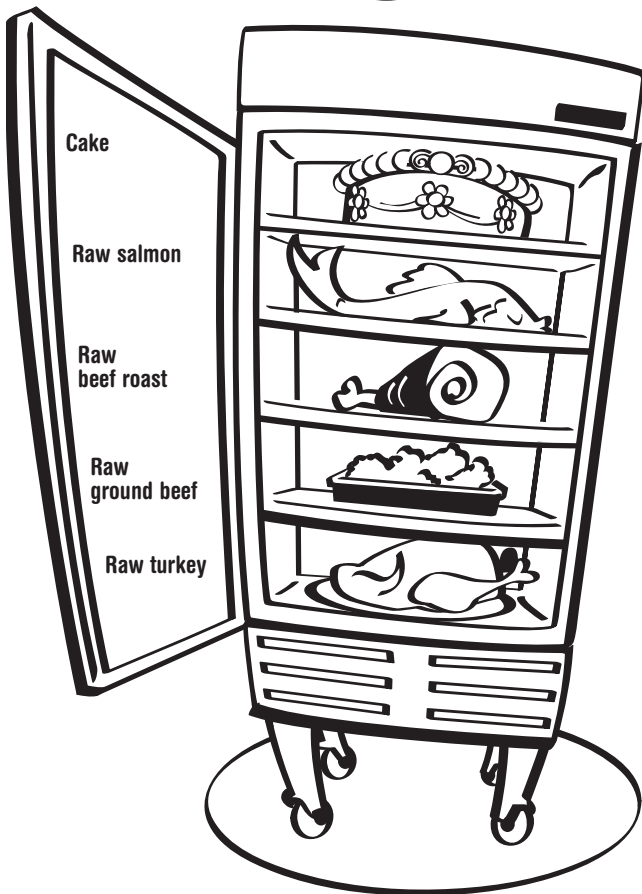
# Preventing Cross-Contamination During Storage

# Optional Activity 1

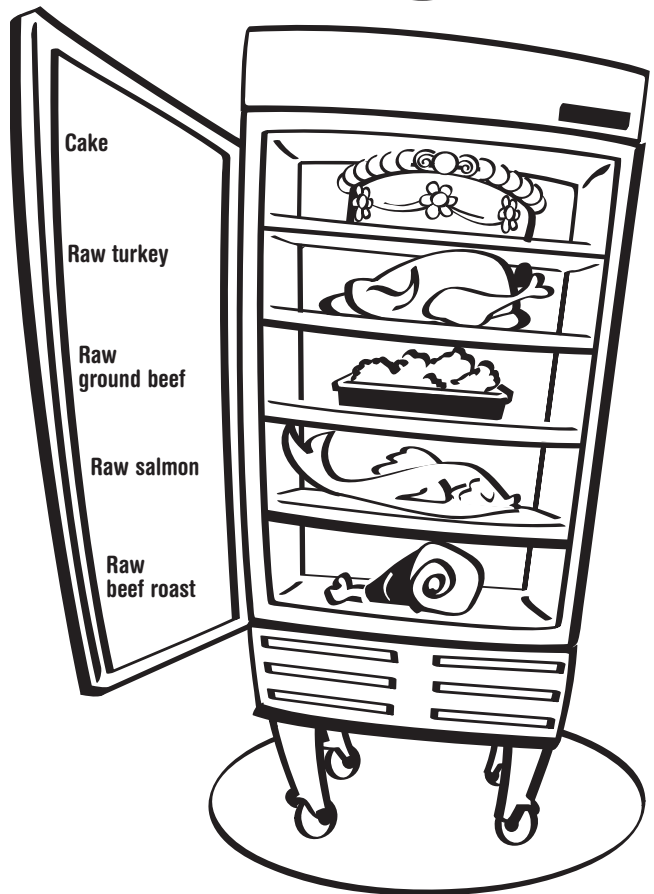
## Pick a Fridge

**Directions:** Circle the letter of the refrigerator in which food has been properly stored to prevent cross-contamination.

**A**



**B**



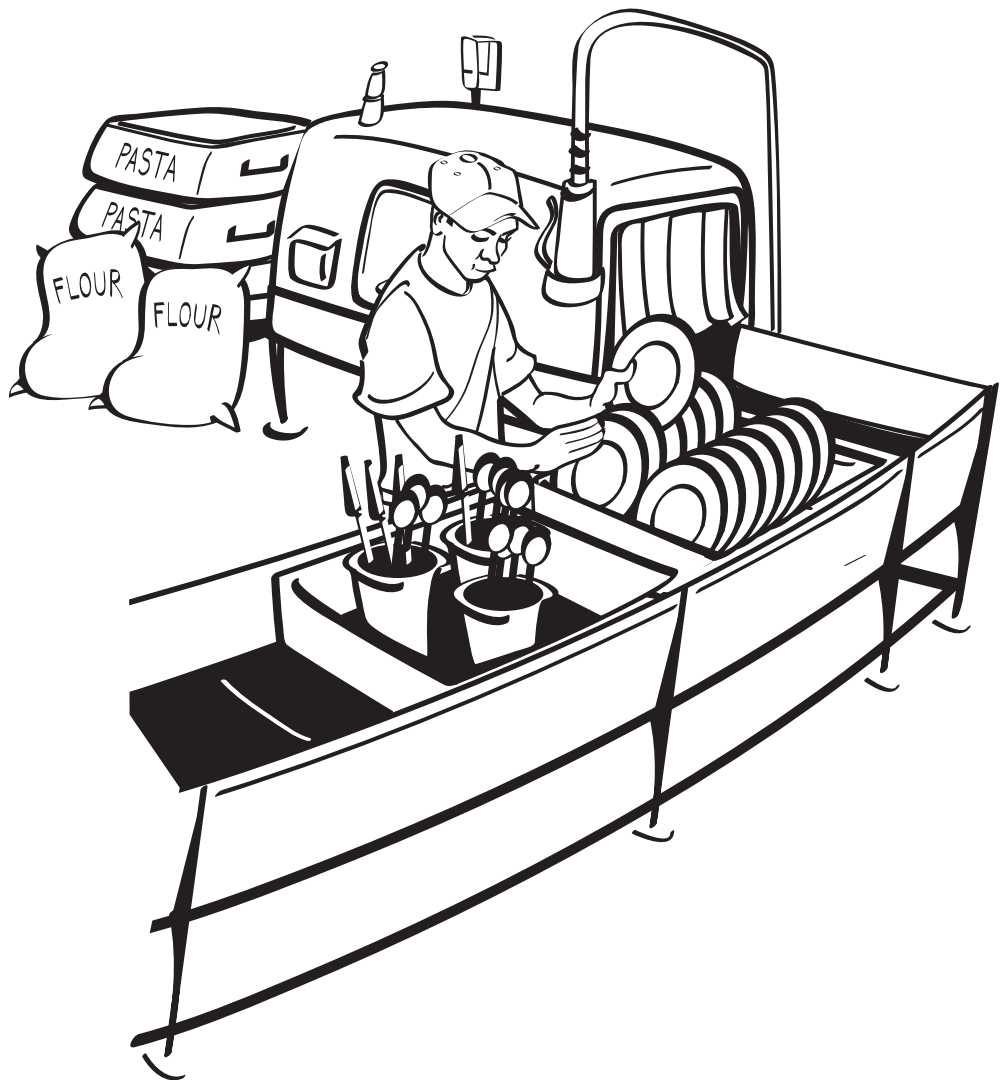
# What's Wrong with This Picture?

**Directions:** The picture below contains unsafe storage practices.  
Circle the food item(s) that have been stored incorrectly.



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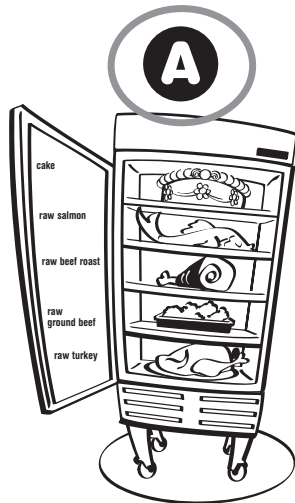


# Preventing Cross-Contamination During Storage Fact Sheet

## Optional Activity Answers

### 1. Pick a Fridge

The food in *Refrigerator A* has been stored properly to prevent cross-contamination. Raw meat, poultry, and fish must be stored below prepared or ready-to-eat food if stored in the same refrigerator. It should also be stored in the following top-to-bottom order: ready-to-eat food, whole fish, whole cuts of beef and pork, ground meats and fish, and whole ground poultry.



### 2. What's Wrong with This Picture?

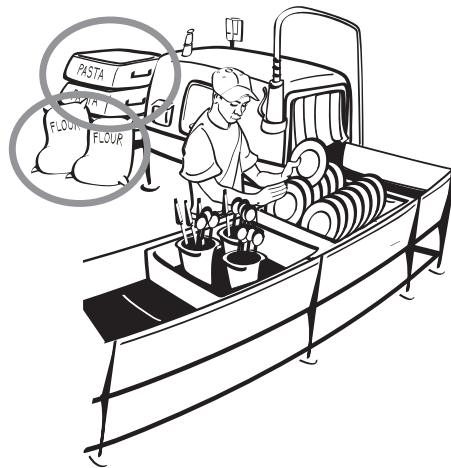
The raw turkey, lettuce, and the food stored in the four hotel pans have all been stored incorrectly.

- The raw turkey has been stored above prepared and ready-to-eat food. If stored in the same refrigerator, raw poultry should be stored on the bottom shelf below any prepared or ready-to-eat items.
- The lettuce has been stored in an uncovered container. The container should have a tight-fitting lid.
- Food has been stored in unmarked hotel pans. Storage containers used to store food should be clearly marked.



### 3. What's Wrong with This Picture?

The flour and the pasta have been stored incorrectly. Food should never be stored in dishwashing areas since it may become contaminated.



### 4. What's Wrong with This Picture?

The bananas, bread and tomatoes have all been stored incorrectly. Food should never be stored near chemicals or cleaning supplies.

