



Food Safety & Nutrition

Sanitizing Cutting Boards

WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY
CLARK COUNTY EXTENSION

Sandra Brown

Food Safety and Nutrition Faculty

Both wood and plastic cutting boards will become contaminated with bacteria on contact with any raw animal product. Both types of cutting boards can transfer bacteria from raw meat to other foods unless they are sanitized.

Research at the University of Wisconsin suggested that wood inhibited the growth of bacteria and thus wooden cutting boards were safest to use. After much publicity of the Wisconsin study, the Food and Drug Administration conducted research on cutting boards and found that wood appears to absorb bacteria into tiny cracks and if not cleaned out, could potentially contaminate food placed on the board. It was much easier to remove the bacteria from plastic cutting boards because they are non-porous. A hard non-porous cutting board such as one made of acrylic plastic is easier to clean than a wooden board because the acrylic board can be washed in the dishwasher.

Whether you prefer to use a plastic or wooden cutting board be certain to sanitize it after it is used for cutting raw meat or poultry. When cutting boards develop knife cuts, they should be sanded or replaced.

To sanitize a cutting board, either plastic or wood, use a dilute chlorine bleach solution (1 tablespoon per gallon of cool water). Be sure to rinse it well with warm water.

For more information contact WSU Extension at 360-397-6060.