

Campylobacter: from farm to fork

About four in five cases of campylobacter poisoning in the UK can be traced back to poultry meat contaminated with the bacterium. To tackle this, and reduce contamination on UK-produced chickens, the whole food chain needs to play its part.

The Food Standards Agency is spearheading a campaign that is bringing together work across the whole food chain, from 'farm to fork' – including chicken producers, processors, caterers and retailers: Acting on Campylobacter Together. We are asking:

Farmers and producers to act to reduce the number of flocks of broilers (chickens grown for meat) that contain campylobacter when they are presented for slaughter.

This will include undertaking comprehensive monitoring of flocks and maximising the effectiveness of biosecurity, for example by working through third party assurance schemes to drive a change in culture and the consistent application of best practice. Industry could also incentivise producers to reduce flock colonisation by rewarding those who have no, or low, levels of campylobacter infection pre-slaughter.

Slaughterhouses and processors to make sure that their processes minimise the levels of contamination in the birds they produce. This should include a sharpened focus on current good hygienic practices in relation to plucking, evisceration, washing and chilling processes, to ensure good hygiene is applied effectively and consistently.

4 in 5 cases come from contaminated poultry



Incentives for low contamination levels



Good hygiene practice



Retailers and supermarkets to play their role by, for example, advising their customers not to wash raw chicken and to cook it thoroughly. They should also provide clear information about hygienic handling of their products, safe cooking, hygienic disposal of packaging, and methods to reduce cross-contamination.

Caterers to follow good hygiene practices at all times and ensure that their staff are aware of the risks from raw poultry and work harder to avoid cross-contamination during handling or from under-cooking.

Local government partners to help raise awareness of campylobacter and ensure that food businesses using chilled poultry meat are aware of the risks and are maintaining the highest standards of hygiene.

Consumers to reflect on whether the way they handle chicken in their homes creates food poisoning risks for themselves and their families. To assist in this, the FSA will undertake studies on how to change consumer behaviour around food preparation and in terms of general hand hygiene.

By acting on campylobacter together we can provide safer food for the nation and save lives.

Spread the word, not the germs!

Avoid
cross-contamination



Clearer
supermarket
packaging



Ensure
high hygiene
standards



Raise
awareness of
campylobacter

