

Campylobacter: how it affects you

Campylobacter is the most common cause of food poisoning in the UK. You can't see it, smell it or even taste it on food, but if it affects you, you won't forget it.

Campylobacter poisoning can result in abdominal pain, severe diarrhoea and sometimes vomiting. In certain cases it can also lead to irritable bowel syndrome, reactive arthritis and Guillain-Barré syndrome – a serious condition of the nervous system. At its worst, it can kill.

The highest risk of severe symptoms caused by campylobacter poisoning is to the under-fives and older people.

More than 1,000 people were so ill because of campylobacter last year they ended up needing to receive hospital treatment. Most survived, but not all. Campylobacter can kill.

How do you get it?

About four in five cases of campylobacter poisoning in the UK come from contaminated poultry. One of the main ways to get and spread campylobacter is through cross-contamination.

Washing raw chicken can actually spread campylobacter by splashing it onto hands, work surfaces, clothing and cooking equipment.

Age groups most at risk

60+ **Under 5s**



1,000
hospitalisations



4 in 5
cases come from
contaminated poultry



What you can do to avoid campylobacter

1. Cover and chill raw chicken

Cover raw chicken and store at the bottom of the fridge so juices cannot drip on to other foods and contaminate them with food poisoning bacteria such as campylobacter.

2. Don't wash raw chicken

Thorough cooking will kill any bacteria present, including campylobacter, while washing chicken can spread germs around the kitchen by splashing.

3. Wash used utensils

Thoroughly wash and clean all utensils, chopping boards and surfaces used to prepare raw chicken. Wash hands thoroughly with soap and warm water after handling raw chicken. This helps stop the spread of campylobacter by avoiding cross contamination.

4. Cook chicken thoroughly

Make sure chicken is steaming hot all the way through before serving. Cut into the thickest part of the meat and check that it is steaming hot with no pink meat and that the juices run clear.

We'll be publicising these messages during Food Safety Week (16–22 June).

You can help us by passing the message on.

The FSA is also monitoring the food industry's efforts to tackle the problem.

Over the next year we will release the results of tests carried out on about 1,000 samples of chicken being sold by UK retailers on a quarterly basis.

In 2015, we will publish a statistical analysis of results from a whole year's sampling. The information published for each sample will include details about where the chicken was bought, the abattoir that processed it, whether or not the sample contained campylobacter and, if so, how heavily it was contaminated.

Spread the word, not the germs!



**Don't wash
raw chicken**

→ Help protect yourself and your family from food poisoning bugs such as **campylobacter** by using our simple food safety tips.

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