

CAMPYLOBACTER

WHAT IS IT AND HOW DOES IT AFFECT YOU?

Campylobacter is the most common cause of food poisoning in the UK that affects more than a quarter of a million people each year. You can't see it, smell it or even taste it on food, but if it affects you, you won't forget it.

An estimated 1,000 people were so ill because of campylobacter last year they ended up needing to receive hospital treatment. Most survived, but not all.

How do you get it?

About four in five cases of campylobacter food 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.

What are the symptoms?

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

Who's most at risk?

We are all at risk of getting food poisoning if we don't deal with raw poultry correctly. Children under five and older people are most at risk of severe symptoms due to having weaker immune systems.

There is also a secondary peak of infection among 25-44 year olds

What you can do to avoid campylobacter:



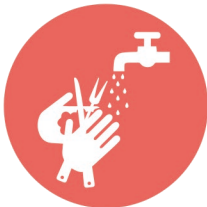
1. Cover and chill raw chicken

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.



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 hands and 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.



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.

What is the FSA doing?

The FSA continues to monitor the food industry's efforts to tackle the problem. Over the past year we have been publishing the results of tests carried out on samples of chicken being sold by UK retailers on a quarterly basis.

In July 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!