



AUSTRALIAN CHICKEN MEAT FEDERATION INC.

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Poultry Industry: Chicken Meat Safe to Eat

The Australian Chicken Meat Federation (ACMF) today released a statement following a segment aired on *Today Tonight*, Tuesday, 21 February 2006, implying that bacteria found on uncooked chicken meat is a public health concern.

According to Dr Andreas Dubs, Executive Director of ACMF, *Today Tonight* has once again run a 'scare campaign' against eating chicken meat and the industry's response is consistent and simple: **chicken meat is safe to eat when it is properly prepared and thoroughly cooked.**

"It is true that all types of raw meat, not just chicken meat, often test positive for low levels of salmonella and campylobacter bacteria. It is also a fact that proper cooking of all types of raw meat destroys the bacteria.

For this reason we have, and always will, advise consumers to cook chicken meat until the juices run clear - not only to ensure the best taste but also to prevent food poisoning

"It is misleading of *Today Tonight* and it unnecessarily frightens consumers to suggest that bacteria found in raw chicken samples represent a general public health concern," Dr Dubs said.

The segment focused on a report prepared for the Victorian Government, which has not yet been released.

"The industry has yet to see the report. We are not in a position to comment on the report but feel compelled to respond to the accusations about the quality and safety of eating chicken meat.

"While the chicken meat industry takes measures to minimise bacterial presence in chicken meat and constantly reviews its practices, there will always be some bacteria present on fresh meat. It is the challenge of working with foods of animal origin. That is why good practices in preparation, handling and cooking meat are so important," he said.

Tips for Safe Food Handling and Cooking Raw Meat

General tips to prevent food poisoning include:

- ✍ Make sure that raw chicken meat is cooked throughout (no longer pink), any juices run clear, and the inside is cooked to (77°C) for breast meat, and (82°C) for thigh meat.
- ✍ If you are served undercooked poultry in a restaurant, send it back for further cooking.
- ✍ Wash hands with soap **before** handling raw chicken
- ✍ Wash hands with soap **after** handling raw chicken and before handling anything else.
- ✍ Prevent cross-contamination in the kitchen by using separate cutting boards for foods of animal origin (beef, pork, chicken) and other foods (salads, breads)
- ✍ Carefully clean all cutting boards, countertops and utensils with soap and hot water after preparing raw food of animal origin (beef, pork, chicken)

For further information on this or related topics, contact Dr Andreas Dubs, Executive Director ACMF on M: 0432 925 933 or visit: www.chicken.org.au, www.foodstandards.gov.au, www.safefood.net.au

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