

Food Safety and Handling Tips for the Home



Australian Chicken Meat Federation (ACMF) Inc

Chicken is a nutritious, healthy food - low in fat and cholesterol and an excellent source of protein. The benefits of chicken certainly stack up, yet there are some basic food safety guidelines that should be followed when preparing and cooking chicken.

Are you aware that by cutting corners on food handling at home you are putting yourself and your family at risk of food poisoning? Despite most people knowing basic food safety rules, recent behavioural research conducted by the Australian Chicken Meat Federation (ACMF) highlights a lack of understanding of why certain food safety practices are essential, especially at home where they are not always being put into practice.

Food safety guidelines aim to prevent the bacteria naturally present in most raw food from spreading and multiplying. The following simple tips can keep bacteria at bay:

FOOD SAFETY INFORMATION COUNCIL GUIDELINES (FSIC)

The FSIC promotes these simple guidelines to ensure the food you're eating is safe:

- Keep hot food steaming hot
- Keep cold food refrigerated
- Cook food properly
- Separate raw and cooked foods
- Keep kitchen and utensils clean
- Wash hands with soap and dry thoroughly

We also recommend:

- As raw meat juices may contain bacteria, prevent it spreading by using different utensils (chopping boards and knives) for preparing raw meat than those used for preparing other foods. Utensils used for foods, such as salads, which will not be cooked before being eaten, should be kept separate.
- Keep everything – hands, fridge, freezer and storage containers – clean, particularly during the food preparation process.

STORING

Refrigeration

- Most raw or cooked chicken can be stored safely in the fridge at 5°C or lower for 2–3 days - minced poultry for just one day.
- Keep raw chicken away from other foods in the fridge AND during preparation, so raw chicken juices do not drip on to other food that will be eaten raw, such as fruits or vegetables.
- If you are storing for more than 2–3 days, chicken products should be frozen.

FREEZING TIPS

- Freeze fresh chicken as soon as possible to maintain quality.
- Use moisture proof wrap or bags when freezing chicken and label packages with the content and date it was frozen.
- Thaw frozen chicken:
 - in the refrigerator
 - in cold water, changing every 30 minutes
 - in the microwave
- NEVER thaw chicken at room temperature

COOKING

- The time needed to cook chicken depends upon the cut and size.
- Your chicken is thoroughly cooked when:
 1. The chicken meat is no longer pink inside and
 2. The meat juices run clear.

You can use a food thermometer to check the temperature at the centre of the thickest part of the meat. When it reaches 75 °C, it is thoroughly cooked.



Food safety needs to get on the home cook's agenda

For excellent resources and more information about food safety and handling of chicken meat call the Chook Infoline 1300 4 CHOOKS (1300 424 665) or visit the website on www.chicken.org.au