

# Food Safety & Handling Tips for the Home

## FACT SHEET



Chicken is a nutritious, healthy food – lean chicken cuts are low in fat and a great 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, behavioural research 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 on raw food from spreading and multiplying. The following simple tips can keep bacteria at bay:



### STORING

Raw chicken can generally be stored safely in the fridge below 5°C for 1-2 days, but any longer and it should be put in the freezer. The same goes for cooked chicken but it can last 2-3 days in the fridge before it should be frozen.

Keep raw chicken away from other foods in the fridge so raw chicken juices do not drip on to other food - it is particularly risky if it drips onto food that won't be cooked or heated before eating, such as fruits or vegetables or already cooked food.



### PREPARATION

Prevent raw chicken juices from coming into contact with other foods. Use separate utensils and boards to prepare raw chicken or thoroughly wash utensils and boards in hot soapy water after being in contact with raw chicken and before they're used for preparation of other foods.

Always wash your hands after handling raw chicken.

Thaw frozen chicken:

- in the refrigerator
- in the microwave.
- **NEVER** thaw chicken at room temperature.
- **NEVER** wash raw chicken



### 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. When pierced to the centre of the thickest part, the meat juices run clear.

Better still, 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 INFORMATION COUNCIL (FSIC) GUIDELINES

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

The FSIC also recommends:

- 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.

*Food safety needs to get on the home cook's menu*

For more great resources and helpful information about food safety and handling of chicken meat, visit

[www.chicken.org.au](http://www.chicken.org.au)