



Food safety advice

SALMONELLA FOOD POISONING

Salmonella food poisoning (Salmonellosis) is an unpleasant and potentially serious illness caused by an infection of salmonella bacteria. The symptoms of this particular type of food poisoning are abdominal pains and diarrhoea, sometimes with fever and headaches and occasionally vomiting. The symptoms may take 12 hours or longer to develop and symptoms range from mild to severe. The illness can last from a couple of days to a week or longer.

If you suffer from these symptoms, drink plenty of fluids to avoid dehydration and if the symptoms persist for more than a day or so, or if the symptoms are severe, contact a doctor. It is a good idea to submit a stool specimen if asked by your GP as this will help identify what has caused your illness.

Salmonella in eggs and poultry

There are many sources of salmonella bacteria, for example, raw meat. However, poultry and eggs have been identified as two of the more important sources in the food we regularly eat. Salmonella bacteria are invisible to the human eye and even badly contaminated food will appear edible, as there is no detectable change in the taste, odour, colour or texture.



Raw poultry can carry the salmonella bacteria. It is, therefore, essential to cook all poultry products thoroughly to kill all the bacteria. There should be no red juices running from cooked chicken or turkey. This is especially important when barbecuing chicken. We would advise that it is cooked in a conventional oven or microwave oven first then finished off on the BBQ, to avoid a charred outside and raw middle!

When handling raw poultry, the following points should be followed:

- **DO** store the poultry at the bottom of the refrigerator and ensure that it is wrapped
- **DO** thaw frozen poultry thoroughly before cooking, making sure it can't drip onto cooked food
- **DO** wash your hands thoroughly with soap and hot water after handling raw poultry, especially before handling other foods.
- **DO** cook raw poultry as soon as quickly as possible after purchase. Once cooked, if it is to be used cold it should be cooled as quickly as possible then covered and stored in the upper part of the refrigerator.
- **DO** ensure all equipment, utensils and work surfaces that come into contact with raw poultry, meats and raw eggs are thoroughly cleaned after use, ideally using a kitchen sanitising cleaner such as 'Dettol'.

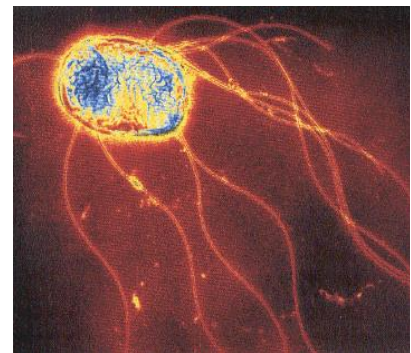


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- **DO NOT** wash raw chicken before cooking as it spreads bacteria around your sink and kitchen.
- **DO NOT** use the same containers and utensils for storing and preparing raw poultry as for storing the cooked poultry or other cooked foods such as cold cooked meats.
- **DO NOT** allow raw poultry or its juices to come into contact with other foods.

EGGS

The number of hens eggs found to be affected by salmonella is very small. The Food Standards Agency has announced a change to its advice about eating eggs - infants, children, pregnant women and elderly people can now safely eat raw or lightly cooked eggs provided that are produced under the British Lion Code of Practice. The advice to the severely immunocompromised is they should not eat lightly cooked or raw eggs.



The existing advice on UK non-Lion eggs, non-hen eggs and eggs from outside the UK, is that they should always be cooked thoroughly for vulnerable groups.

- **DO** store the eggs in a cool, dry place preferably in the refrigerator.
- **DO** eat all eggs within the 'Best Before' date shown on the packaging.
- **DO** store all eggs away from other sources of salmonella such as raw meat and poultry as shells are porous and the bacteria can travel through them.
- **DO** make sure that all preparation surfaces, containers and utensils used for raw eggs are thoroughly cleaned before the preparation of other food.
- **DO NOT** buy or use eggs with cracked shells – it is illegal to sell them.

Egg dishes:

- those that are to be eaten cold, keep refrigerated,
- those that are to be eaten hot, keep piping hot and consume both as quickly as possible after preparation.