

AMR in Campylobacter in UK chicken over the last 20 years

The study aimed to assess any trends during this 20-year period and provides a baseline against which to evaluate future, hoped-for reductions in AMR.

AMR is when bacteria adapt to become resistant to the killing effects of antimicrobials, such as antibiotics. This resistance subsequently makes such infections in humans more difficult to treat using drugs. AMR can develop in any bacteria, including Campylobacter. Campylobacter is the main cause of bacterial food poisoning in the developed world and it is estimated that there are in excess of half a million cases annually in the UK.

The FSA's Science lead in Microbiological Risk Assessment, Dr Paul Cook, said:

“While the data shows a marked increase in AMR in Campylobacter to certain antimicrobials, it is encouraging that there has been no significant increase in resistance since 2014.

“Any increase of AMR in Campylobacter is a concern and continued surveillance is essential. We will continue to carry out AMR surveillance in chicken and other meats and to monitor any long-term trends in resistance, while promoting good food hygiene practice to reduce exposure to AMR bacteria and protect consumer safety.”

Since its formation in 2000, the FSA has commissioned several UK-wide retail surveys and sampling studies that involved testing for Campylobacter in chicken. A significant proportion of the [Campylobacter](#) isolates detected were further tested to assess resistance to a range of antimicrobials.

Key findings from this report vary between the five main types of antimicrobial drugs included in the study. Resistance to quinolones (ciprofloxacin and nalidixic acid) and tetracycline was common in the most prevalent types of Campylobacter from chicken (Campylobacter jejuni and Campylobacter coli). In comparison, resistance to erythromycin and streptomycin was much rarer in the Campylobacter isolates examined. Gentamicin resistance was very rare.

There are effective ways for consumers to reduce exposure to AMR bacteria. This includes cleaning surfaces properly, cooking food thoroughly, chilling food at the correct temperature and handling food hygienically so it doesn't cross contaminate other foods or surfaces. For any fruit or vegetables consumed raw, make sure they are washed thoroughly or peeled as this will help to remove any visible dirt or bacterial contamination.

For more information on AMR, including an 'FSA Explains' video, visit our dedicated [AMR webpage](#). The [research report](#) is available on our research pages.