

FSA alerts consumers on salmonella and Polish poultry

The Food Standards Agency (FSA) along with [Food Standards Scotland](#) (FSS) and the [UK Health Security Agency](#) (UKHSA) is reminding consumers to take care when handling and cooking poultry products at home, including chilled and frozen chicken and turkey drumsticks, breasts, thighs and chicken pieces. This is because of a recent rise in cases of food poisoning caused by Salmonella Enteritidis linked to poultry products imported from Poland.

Our advice is to:

- Follow cooking and storage instructions on the product label, including the cooking time and temperature - this is important to ensure that the food is safe when consumed
- Use or freeze products by their use-by date
- Wash hands thoroughly after handling raw poultry products
- Never wash raw poultry products
- Clean all surfaces and utensils with hot soapy water after contact with raw poultry
- Only reheat cooked and frozen meat once

An investigation is ongoing into multiple strains of Salmonella linked to poultry products imported to the UK from Poland. There have been over 200 human cases of salmonellosis caused by specific genetic strains of Salmonella Enteritidis that have been linked to poultry products such as meat and eggs, this year.

The FSA is in discussion with officials in Poland and the EU to ensure all necessary steps are taken to improve the safety of poultry and eggs imported from Poland. The forthcoming import controls on food and feed coming into the UK from the EU will also allow us to check these controls are in place and help to uphold the UK's high food and feed standards and to protect public health.

Our advice is to always take care when storing, handling, and cooking poultry products such as chicken, turkey and duck to help reduce the risk of food poisoning to you and your family.

You should always check the cooking instructions on food packaging, as different brands of the same type of product might have different instructions. Cooking food at the right temperature and for the correct length of time will ensure that any harmful bacteria are killed. At the same time, make sure that any surfaces and equipment that come into contact with food are clean to avoid risks from cross contamination and always wash your hands before and after handling food.

A number of the cases have involved the consumption of eggs produced in Poland and used in meals in restaurants and cafes. We are therefore asking local authorities to remind food businesses about the importance of good hygiene practices.

Tina Potter, Head of Incidents - Food Standards Agency

Salmonella is a type of stomach bug that causes stomach pain, vomiting and diarrhoea. Symptoms typically resolve themselves within a few days, however, they can be more severe with fever and dehydration, especially in young children, those who are pregnant and those with weakened immune systems.

Salmonella can be spread from person to person as well as from food, so anyone affected should follow good hygiene practices, such as washing hands thoroughly after using the bathroom and avoiding handling food for others where possible, if you have symptoms.

Lesley Larkin, Deputy Director for Gastrointestinal Infections - UKHSA

Salmonella is a common bacteria that can cause food poisoning. Salmonella can be found in a variety of different foods but raw meat (processed and unprocessed), undercooked poultry, eggs and unpasteurised milk are the most commonly reported foods causing salmonellosis. Inadequate cooking and cross-contamination in the kitchen during food preparation can lead to salmonellosis. The bacteria can also spread from person to person.

Babies, children, pregnant women, and older people should only eat runny or raw eggs if they have a [British Lion mark](#) or are produced under the [Laid in Britain egg assurance scheme](#). This advice does not apply to individuals who are severely immunocompromised.

Please see our [Salmonella guidance](#) and the [NHS Choices page on food poisoning](#) for more information on this foodborne disease. Our [Home food fact checker](#) also has advice on how to store, cook and reheat food at home.