



SALMONELLA

WHAT CAUSES SALMONELLA?

Given that Americans eat about **160 million servings** of chicken every day, the vast majority of consumers are cooking and handling chicken properly and having a safe experience.

But we want that experience to be safe each and every time. So let's look at what salmonella is, what the chicken industry is doing to make sure your chicken is as safe as possible before it gets to your grocery cart, and what steps you can take in the home to prevent salmonella from spreading.

WHAT IS SALMONELLA?

Salmonellosis (the infection humans get from ingesting salmonella) can be caused by eating undercooked meat, poultry or eggs, cross contamination in the kitchen, or not properly cooking or washing raw vegetables.

Any raw agricultural product—whether it's fresh fruit, vegetables, fish or poultry—is susceptible to naturally occurring bacteria. Whether it's labeled "organic," "natural," purchased in the grocery store or at your local farmers' market, there is the potential that fresh food could make us sick if improperly handled or cooked.

WHAT IS THE INDUSTRY DOING TO MAKE SURE CHICKEN MEAT IS SAFE?

While people should know not to eat undercooked chicken, not everyone knows all of the steps that need to take place in order to make sure the product is as safe as possible before it ends up in your grocery cart or on your plate.

- 1: It all starts even before the egg. Breeder hens—who produce the eggs—are attended to carefully and humanely. Healthy breeder hens lead to healthy eggs and eventually, healthy chicks. Additional measures are taken to ensure the chicks inherit the hens' natural, good antibodies while preventing the sharing of any bad antibodies or diseases.
- 2: At the hatchery where the chicks are hatched, strict sanitation measures and appropriate vaccinations ensure the chicks are off to a healthy start. At the feed mill, the corn and soybean meal that the chickens eat is heat treated, killing any bacteria that may be present. And on the farm, veterinarians and strict biosecurity measures ensure chickens are safe and healthy.
- 3: At the processing facility, the U.S. federal meat and poultry inspection system complements efforts by chicken processors to ensure that the every single chicken product is safe, wholesome and correctly labeled and packaged. (U.S. Department of Agriculture inspectors are present in every facility that processes chickens – it is required by law.)

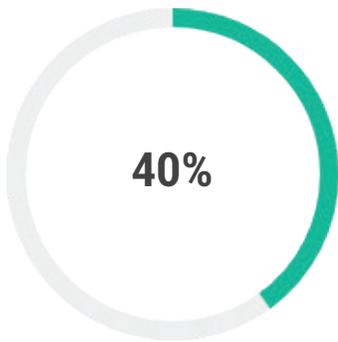
These efforts at the processing facility include: organic rinses that cleanse the chicken, reducing any potential foodborne pathogens or bacteria; keeping the meat at the proper cool temperature; and using metal detectors to make sure that no foreign object makes its way into a product or package. Microbiological tests are then conducted on the products by both the companies and federal laboratories to help ensure that food safety systems are working properly and that each and every final product meets USDA standards for wholesomeness.



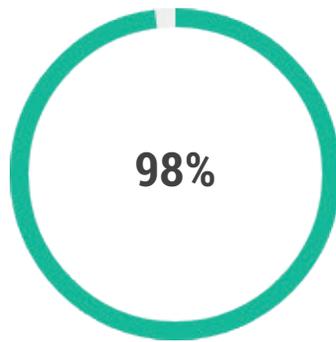
SALMONELLA

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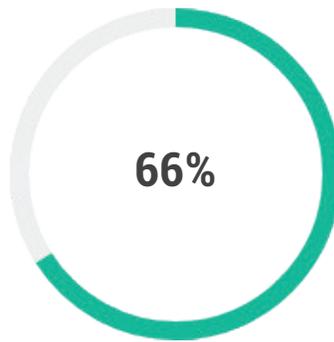
These efforts are netting tangible results.



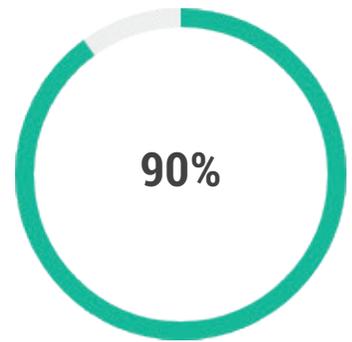
From 2001 to 2010, outbreaks related to E. coli, Salmonella and other pathogens decreased by more than 40%.



98.5% of USDA tests for Salmonella on whole chickens at large plants are negative.



Over the past 5 years, we have reduced Salmonella on whole chickens by 66%.



According to USDA, FDA and CDC, 90% of Salmonella illness are attributed to sources other than chicken.

But all of the tests and technology and safety procedures are for naught if the chain of safety is not maintained by consumers in the grocery store and at home, so we've put together some food safety tips to help you out.

WHAT CAN YOU DO AT HOME?

Prevent salmonella from spreading in your home by handling and storing raw chicken properly, cooking chicken to 165 degrees Fahrenheit, and thoroughly washing all cooking and prepping surfaces, including counters, cutting boards, and hands.

These 4 simple tips for preventing the spread of salmonella in your home:

CLEAN

Wash hands with warm water and soap for at least 20 seconds before and after handling raw chicken and after using the bathroom, changing diapers and handling pets.

Wash cutting boards, dishes, utensils, and counter tops with hot soapy water after preparing each food item and before you go on to the next food.

SEPARATE

Avoid cross-contaminating other foods. Separate raw chicken from other foods in your grocery shopping cart, grocery bags, your kitchen and in your refrigerator.

Use one cutting board for fresh produce and a separate one for raw meat, poultry and seafood.

Do not rinse raw poultry in your sink – it will not remove bacteria. In fact, it can spread raw juices around your sink, onto your countertops or onto ready-to-eat foods. Bacteria in raw meat and poultry can only be killed when cooked to a safe internal temperature.





SALMONELLA

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COOK

Cook chicken thoroughly. All poultry products, including ground poultry, should always be cooked to 165 °F internal temperature as measured with a food thermometer; leftovers should be refrigerated no more than two hours after cooking.

The color of cooked poultry is not a sure sign of its safety. Only by using a food thermometer can one accurately determine that poultry has reached a safe minimum internal temperature of 165 °F throughout the product. Be particularly careful with foods prepared for infants, older adults and persons with impaired immune systems.

When reheating leftovers, cover to retain moisture and ensure that chicken is heated all the way through. Bring gravies to a rolling boil before serving.



CHILL

Make raw chicken or meat products the last items you select at the store. Once home, the products must be refrigerated or frozen promptly.

Freeze raw chicken if it is not to be used within two days. If properly packaged, chicken can remain frozen for up to one year.

After cooking, refrigerate any uneaten chicken within two hours. Leftovers will remain safe to eat for two to three days.

Refrigerators should be set to maintain a temperature of 40 °F or below.

Thaw frozen chicken in the refrigerator — not on the countertop — or in cold water. To speed up the process, chicken can be thawed in the microwave. Timing will vary.

When marinating, make a separate batch of marinade to serve with the cooked chicken and discard anything that was used on the raw chicken. Always marinate chicken in the refrigerator, for up to two days.

When barbecuing chicken outdoors, keep refrigerated until ready to cook. Do not place cooked chicken on the same plate used to transport raw chicken to the grill.



LOOKING FOR MORE INFORMATION ON SALMONELLA?

Get [answers to the top questions about Salmonella](#) from the National Chicken Council.

Download our [Salmonella Stats infographic](#).

