

with a lid, wax paper, or microwave-safe plastic wrap. Rotate food during microwaving. Check for proper final temperature in several different spots using a meat thermometer. Make sure to include standing time as indicated by the recipe. Do not taste or serve sauces that have been used to marinate raw poultry.

When Serving

Use clean dishes and utensils; this includes grilled foods, too. Do not leave food out of refrigeration for longer than 2 hours. At picnics keep the cooler well iced, and in the shade if possible. Pack lunches in insulated containers, and keep them cold. When serving at a party, keep hot food at 140°F or hotter in a chafing dish or an electric food warmer. Keep cold foods on ice. Put out small amounts of food at a time, replacing the entire dish when a refill is needed. Do not add food to what is already on the table.



Storing Leftovers

Use small shallow containers for storing leftovers. Leave enough room between containers so that air can circulate. Remove stuffing from poultry and place it into a separate container for refrigerated storage.

Reheating Leftovers

All food should be reheated to at least 165°F and sauces to a rolling boil. Make sure that food reheated in the microwave is rotated frequently and heated thoroughly.

Food safety is a shared responsibility. By following these guidelines, you will be able to store, handle and prepare food safely.

This information in this leaflet was provided by Dr. Sarah G. Birkhold, Assistant Professor and Extension Specialist, Poultry Science.

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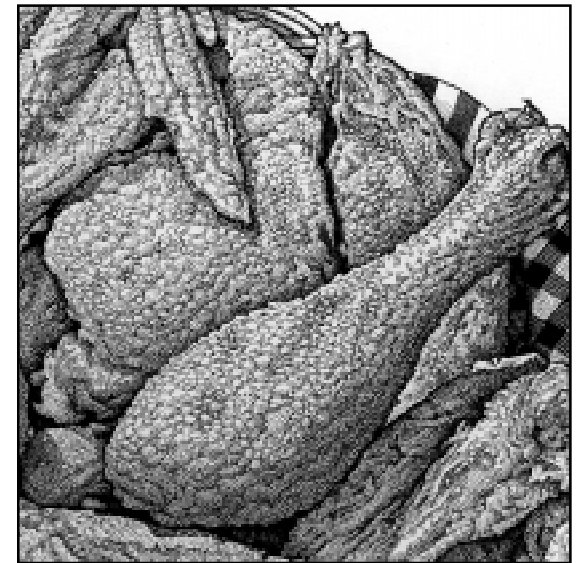
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Texas Agricultural Extension Service

The Texas A&M University System

Enjoy Poultry Meat Safely



ENJOY POULTRY MEAT SAFELY

Poultry meat products are a popular protein source for many American consumers. Poultry is seen as a nutritious, economical and versatile food choice. There are many steps that consumers can take to make it a safe food choice as well.

Most of the cases of food poisoning that occur are due to improper handling, storage or cooking of food. By following the food safety tips presented in this pamphlet, you can enjoy poultry meat products safely.

To understand food safety, we need to understand some basic microbiology. Two groups of bacteria can be found on raw poultry meat: the bacteria that cause food to spoil and the bacteria that can cause foodborne illness.

Food spoilage bacteria can grow even when food is refrigerated. When the numbers of spoilage bacteria are large enough, they cause “off odors” and “off flavors.” When the food smells “bad” or looks “bad,” throw it away.

Bacteria that cause foodborne illnesses are not as obvious. Even when present in large numbers, they give no warning signs. Because of this, it is important to handle all raw poultry products with care all of the time. Some bacteria, such as *Salmonella*, must be alive and able to grow inside of the body to cause sickness. However, some, such as *Staphylococcus* and *Clostridium*, produce toxins in

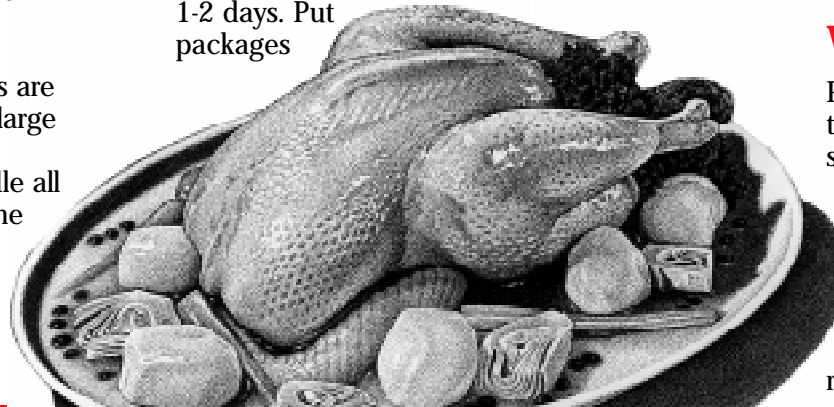
the food which are not destroyed by heating. Therefore, all food must be properly handled **before and after** cooking.

At the Grocery

Your food safety responsibility begins when you select your food. Buy groceries last and immediately take them home and put them in the refrigerator. Make sure all food is in good condition when you buy it. Buy only frozen food that is frozen rock-solid. Refrigerated food should feel cold. Make sure that raw poultry is not bagged with food that can be eaten raw, such as vegetables or cooked deli meats. Raw poultry should be placed in plastic bags, then into a separate paper bag for extra insulation. If the trip home is a long one, take a cooler packed with ice to transport raw poultry home. Refrigerate raw poultry immediately.

In the Refrigerator

Keep your refrigerator 40°F or less. Freeze fresh poultry immediately if not used within 1-2 days. Put packages



of raw poultry onto a plate in the refrigerator so their juices will not drip onto other foods, or onto cans.

In the Kitchen

One of the basic rules of food safety is to keep everything clean. Wash hands in hot soapy water for at least 20 seconds before preparing food. Wash them frequently during food preparation and always after using the bathroom, changing diapers, or touching pets. Keep raw poultry and its juices away from other foods. Wash your hands, knife and cutting board in hot soapy water after cutting up raw poultry. Use a separate plastic cutting board for raw meats. Get a clean dishcloth after washing surfaces and utensils that have been in contact with raw poultry and its juices. It is a good idea to use a sanitizing solution after washing with soapy water. A simple sanitizing solution can be made using one tablespoon bleach per gallon of water. This solution can be used to sanitize equipment and cutting boards.

When Cooking

Poultry should be cooked to a final internal temperature of 180-185° F. Ground poultry should be cooked to at least 165° F. Do not trust pop-up indicators. Always use a meat thermometer placed in the thickest portion of the meat or in the inner thigh muscle of whole chicken, cornish game hens, or turkeys. When slicing meat, make sure it is fully cooked and that the juices run clear. When microwaving, cover food