

Dear Sir/Madam,

**A plea from all the major supermarkets and the Food Standards Agency**

We are writing to ask for your support during this year's Food Safety Week (16 to 22 June 2014).

Nearly half a million people a year are struck down by food poisoning caused by germs on uncooked poultry or the water and kitchen utensils that touch it. At its worst, it can ruin lives, and results in an unnecessary burden on the UK economy which runs to hundreds of millions of pounds a year.

We know from our research that while most people know and follow most of the FSA recommended practices in their kitchens, they don't know about or don't follow FSA advice about not washing raw chicken, and may not know that they could be spreading these dangerous germs. You have the perfect platform to help people understand how they can cook safe (as well as delicious) food. We need your support!

**Our theme for this year's Food Safety Week is 'Don't Wash Raw Chicken'.**

You can help by making sure that any chicken or poultry recipes you use contain this one clear instruction – and that your chefs and presenters take a little time to mention it (and why). We'll be sharing advice across the week on social media, so please do follow @foodgov and support our campaign.

During Food Safety Week 2014 all the major supermarkets will be acting together to tackle this issue by running features on food safety in their customer and staff magazines, on their social media channels, in stores, websites, and in their in-house cookery schools reminding people not to wash raw chicken. Here's why:

*We are proud to be working with the Food Standards Agency and playing our part alongside our colleagues and customers. As a responsible retailer we want to ensure that every chicken bought in our stores makes its way safely to the dinner table. We are glad to help dispel these 'food myths' and help people receive the correct advice on keeping safe in their own kitchens.*

**Neil Nugent, Executive Chef, Morrisons**

*Sainsbury's are delighted to be working with the FSA on this important campaign ahead of Food Safety Week. We'll be getting the message out to our colleagues and customers and working with the FSA to keep food standards high.*

**Judith Batchelar, Director of Brand, Sainsbury's**

*At Asda, we are fully supportive of the FSA's objectives in delivering the 'Don't Wash Chicken' message during this year's Food Safety Week. We understand the importance of highlighting this message to our customers, and working in partnership with the FSA and other retailers we will be driving the campaign message through our various communication channels.*

**Paul Kelly, Corporate Affairs Director, Asda**

*Our advice to customers is 'Don't wash chicken' and we are committed to widening understanding about food hygiene by working with the Food Standards Agency and the industry on this campaign to spread the message.*

**Cathryn Higgs, Food Policy Manager, The Co-operative Food**

*Waitrose fully supports the aims of Food Safety Week and urges all consumers to heed advice from the Food Standards Agency and not wash chicken before cooking.*

**David Croft, Director of Quality & Technical, Waitrose**

*We are very pleased to be working with the FSA on this campaign to raise awareness of simple but important measures like not washing chicken. Together we can make a real difference to food safety in our customers' homes.*

**Tim Smith, Group Quality Director, Tesco**

*We have always been committed to providing our customers with safe, quality food and are delighted to support the Food Standards Agency's "Don't wash your chicken" campaign for chilled poultry.*

**Trish Twohig, Technical Manager, Iceland**

*Food safety and quality have always been at the heart of our business. We fully support the Food Standards Agency campaign and will continue to encourage all our customers not wash chicken before cooking.*

**Paul Willgoss, Director of Food Technology, Marks and Spencer**

*Aldi fully supports the FSA's Food Safety Week. As a responsible retailer, we are committed to broadening the understanding around food safety and therefore, along with the Food Standards Agency, would like to advise customers to not wash chicken before cooking.*

**Tony Baines/Giles Hurley, Managing Director of Corporate Buying, Aldi UK**

*Lidl UK are committed to increasing consumer awareness of food safety and are fully supportive of the Food Standards Agency message 'Don't Wash Chicken'. We will be communicating this important message to our customers during this year's Food Safety Week.*

**Lucinda Cobb, Head of Quality Assurance, Lidl**

There's a briefing note attached to this letter which should give you all the information you need, but please do ask if there's anything more we can do to help you spread the word – and not the germs.

Yours faithfully,



**Catherine Brown**  
Chief Executive  
Food Standards Agency

**ACT** | Acting on  
Campylobacter  
Together

**Iceland**



**M**  
MORRISONS

**Sainsbury's**

**TESCO**



**Waitrose**

The **co-operative**

MARKS &  
SPENCER

BRITISH RETAIL CONSORTIUM

**ASDA**

# Campylobacter: how it affects you

**Campylobacter is the most common cause of food poisoning in the UK. You can't see it, smell it or even taste it on food, but if it affects you, you won't forget it.**

Campylobacter poisoning can result in abdominal pain, severe diarrhoea and sometimes vomiting. In certain cases it can also lead to irritable bowel syndrome, reactive arthritis and Guillain-Barré syndrome – a serious condition of the nervous system. At its worst, it can kill.

The highest risk of severe symptoms caused by campylobacter poisoning is to the under-fives and older people.

More than 1,000 people were so ill because of campylobacter last year they ended up needing to receive hospital treatment. Most survived, but not all. Campylobacter can kill.

## How do you get it?

About four in five cases of campylobacter poisoning in the UK come from contaminated poultry. One of the main ways to get and spread campylobacter is through cross-contamination.

Washing raw chicken can actually spread campylobacter by splashing it onto hands, work surfaces, clothing and cooking equipment.

## Age groups most at risk

**60+** **Under 5s**



**1,000**  
hospitalisations



**4 in 5**  
cases come from  
contaminated poultry



## What you can do to avoid campylobacter

### 1. Cover and chill raw chicken

Cover raw chicken and store at the bottom of the fridge so juices cannot drip on to other foods and contaminate them with food poisoning bacteria such as campylobacter.

### 2. Don't wash raw chicken

Thorough cooking will kill any bacteria present, including campylobacter, while washing chicken can spread germs around the kitchen by splashing.

### 3. Wash used utensils

Thoroughly wash and clean all utensils, chopping boards and surfaces used to prepare raw chicken. Wash hands thoroughly with soap and warm water after handling raw chicken. This helps stop the spread of campylobacter by avoiding cross contamination.

### 4. Cook chicken thoroughly

Make sure chicken is steaming hot all the way through before serving. Cut into the thickest part of the meat and check that it is steaming hot with no pink meat and that the juices run clear.

We'll be publicising these messages during Food Safety Week (16–22 June).

You can help us by passing the message on.

The FSA is also monitoring the food industry's efforts to tackle the problem.

Over the next year we will release the results of tests carried out on about 1,000 samples of chicken being sold by UK retailers on a quarterly basis.

In 2015, we will publish a statistical analysis of results from a whole year's sampling. The information published for each sample will include details about where the chicken was bought, the abattoir that processed it, whether or not the sample contained campylobacter and, if so, how heavily it was contaminated.

## Spread the word, not the germs!



**Don't wash  
raw chicken**

→ Help protect yourself and your family from food poisoning bugs such as **campylobacter** by using our simple food safety tips.

**Campylobacter** is the most common cause of food poisoning in the UK.