

Food safety advice during bird flu outbreaks

Avian influenza - also known as bird flu - does not pose a food safety risk as long as your poultry and eggs are cooked thoroughly. Here are some tips on keeping safe at home.

It's safe to eat cooked poultry and eggs

Bird flu is not a food safety concern. Heat kills the bird flu virus, so all our existing advice about safely handling and preparing chickens and eggs still applies.

It remains safe to eat thoroughly cooked poultry, eggs, and egg products.

We also always recommend handwashing and thorough cooking as a good food safety practice when handling poultry and eggs.

How to handle and cook chicken and other poultry

Here are some simple things you can always do to keep yourself and your family safe when handling and cooking chicken. The below advice also applies to turkey or duck.

Handling raw chicken

- Don't wash your chicken before preparing it. Rinsing the chicken just spread pathogens to other surfaces.
- After handling raw chicken, wash your hands on both sides using clean, warm, soapy water for at least 20 seconds. Then dry them with a clean, dry towel for another 20 seconds. This is to prevent viruses and bacteria from the chicken spreading from your hands to other food.
- Keep your raw chicken separate from ready-to-eat and fresh foods, using separate chopping boards, plates, and utensils to prepare raw chicken. Always thoroughly wash preparation surfaces, dishes, and utensils with hot soapy water, then rinse and dry them before using them for other foods.
- Use a different plate for raw and cooked chicken.

Cooking chicken

Cooking kills the bird flu virus, so make sure your chicken is thoroughly cooked before serving. The juices should run clear, and the chicken needs to be cooked for:

- 75°C for at least 30 seconds; or
- 70°C for 3 minutes; or
- 65°C for 15 minutes.

How to handle and cook eggs

Handling eggs

- Keep your eggs in the fridge.
- Eat them within the recommended date on the egg carton.
- After handling eggs, wash your hands on both sides using clean, warm, soapy water for at least 20 seconds.
- Also thoroughly wash preparation surfaces, dishes, and utensils with hot soapy water, then rinse and dry them, after handling eggs.

Cooking eggs

- Cook your eggs thoroughly – until the white is completely firm and the yolk begins to thicken.
- Children, pregnant people, people over 65 years old, and people with low or compromised immune systems should avoid eating raw or undercooked eggs. This includes foods containing raw eggs, such as home-made mayonnaise, hollandaise sauce, and some desserts. Supermarket-bought sauces and desserts are either heat treated or use heat-treated eggs, so are a safe option.