

Safe Handling of Poultry



Is it safe to eat chicken, duck, turkey and goose? The answer to this is yes, as long as proper precautions are taken and good hygiene is practiced.

Cleanliness

- Wash your hands often with soap and warm water. Wash them before handling food, between handling raw and cooked foods, after using the bathroom, changing diapers or touching pets. Always wipe hands dry with a paper towel preferably, or clean hand towels.
- Wash all surfaces and equipment including cutting boards, sinks, utensils, dishes, counters and anything else that has come into contact with a raw food before another food touches that item or surface.
- Do not touch raw poultry and then touch your face before washing your hands. Bacteria from raw poultry can enter your body through your nose, mouth or eyes. Also, be careful if you have any cuts or sores on your hands, in which case, you



may want to wear disposable gloves.

- Sanitize sponges used to clean surfaces and equipment used in preparation of raw poultry. A solution of 2 teaspoons of chlorine bleach in one quart of water makes an adequate sanitizing solution for this. Dispose of this solution after one week.
- Wash dish towels often in hot water and always after they may have come in contact with raw foods or use paper towels to clean kitchen surfaces.

Handling Raw and Cooked Foods

- Keep raw poultry away from other foods including fresh fruits and vegetables, other raw meats and eggs. Keep them separated in your grocery cart, in your refrigerator and while preparing foods.
- Do not let the juices from raw poultry drip on other foods. Store raw poultry on the bottom shelf of your refrigerator or on a solid shelf where the juices cannot drip onto other foods.
- Use separate utensils for preparing raw poultry.
- Avoid washing raw poultry and meats so as to minimize splashing onto utensils and other food contact areas and contaminating them.
- Store food in containers that will eliminate contact between raw and prepared foods.

Cook Foods Thoroughly

- Poultry must be cooked to an internal temperature of 165 degrees Fahrenheit in the thickest part of the bird to ensure it has been safely cooked.
- Use a food thermometer to check the temperature. Juices running clear is not an indication that the poultry has been safely cooked, nor is it an adequate check of the internal temperature.
- Eggs must be cooked solid. Yolks should not be runny or liquid. Egg whites must be cooked as well. Do not eat foods made with raw or undercooked eggs. Dispose of the eggshells as these may harbor bacteria. Wash hands after handling eggs or eggshells.



- Cook raw poultry within a couple of days of purchase. Do not store raw poultry in the refrigerator for more than 1-2 days. If you are going to freeze raw poultry, freeze it promptly on return from purchasing it.
- Dispose of leftover poultry after three to four days.

Following these practices will ensure you and your family can enjoy poultry that is safe from harmful bacteria.

For more information about food safety and preservation, call M.S.U. Extension-Oakland County at 248/858-0904.

Keep Food at Safe Temperatures

- Do not leave cooked poultry at room temperature for over two hours.
- Cool cooked poultry down to below 40 degrees Fahrenheit to inhibit the growth of microorganisms.
- Serve poultry promptly after cooking to ensure it is kept sufficiently hot to inhibit microorganism growth.

Would you like additional information?

Additional information is available on-line. Please see [MSU Extension-Oakland County's publications](#) as well as [MSU Extension's Bulletin Office](#) on campus.

Contact our food preservation staff at 248/858-0904 for assistance with food safety and preservation questions or issues.

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