



For Immediate Release:

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Cook Poultry to Proper Temperatures to Avoid Food Illness County Public Health Investigating Multiple Drug Resistant Salmonella Outbreak

LOS ANGELES – The Los Angeles County Department of Public Health reminds all Angelenos to practice proper food safety when preparing, cooking and packaging food. The current outbreak of salmonella associated with insufficiently cooked chicken is a reminder to cook poultry to a safe minimum internal temperature of 165°F as measured with a food thermometer.

"Salmonella is common in poultry and undercooking always increases infection risk. We need to be careful to always cook poultry to the proper internal temperature of at least 165°F," said Jonathan E. Fielding, MD, MPH, Director of Public Health and Health Officer. "A meat and poultry thermometer is a cheap investment in peace of mind when you are cooking."

Salmonella is a group of bacteria that can cause salmonellosis, which is one of the most common causes of foodborne illness. Salmonella infections can be life-threatening, especially to those with weak immune systems, such as infants, the elderly and persons with HIV infection or undergoing chemotherapy.

People who think they have become ill from eating chicken associated with this outbreak should inform their primary health care provider about this antibiotic resistance.

Symptoms of Salmonella infection include:

- Diarrhea, fever, and abdominal cramps 12 to 72 hours after infection.
- Additional symptoms may be chills, headache, nausea and vomiting that can last up to seven days.
- The illness usually lasts 4 to 7 days, and most persons recover without treatment.
- Children younger than 5 years, older adults, and people with weakened immune systems are more likely to have a severe illness from Salmonella infection.
- Contact your primary care provider if you think you may have become ill from eating contaminated food.

Treatment:

- Drink plenty of fluids and get rest.
- If you cannot drink enough fluids to prevent dehydration or if your symptoms are severe, call your doctor.
- Treatment with antibiotics is generally not needed but is more likely indicated if you have the strains causing the current outbreak. If you have concerns, please consult with your primary care physician.

The current outbreak caused by salmonella is more serious than usual because these bacteria are resistant to multiple antibiotics. However, even today the majority of bacterial food-borne illnesses are not due to drug resistant salmonella. Most food-borne illness is caused, in addition to not cooking meat or chicken thoroughly, by: allowing "cold" foods, like potato salad, to get warm or "hot" foods, like casseroles or meatballs, to get to room temperature; or handling food with contaminated hands.



"By following simple food safety precautions such as washing your hands before and after handling raw food and maintaining correct temperatures during and after cooking will ensure you and your guests walk away with great memories of a good meal instead of a nasty illness," said Fielding.

Salmonella Outbreak Investigation

The Los Angeles County Department of Public Health is coordinating with the California Department of Public Health and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) regarding the outbreak of illness caused by several strains of Salmonella Heidelberg associated with raw chicken products produced by Foster Farms at three facilities in California. As of October 7, 2013, a total of 278 cases have been reported in 17 states. Most cases have been reported in California (213), while Los Angeles County has confirmed a total of 18 cases with 9 hospitalizations and no deaths.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) has an ongoing investigation. Additionally, there has been no recall of chickens issued, as Salmonella is commonly found in raw chicken. During the investigation, FSIS has been unable to link the illnesses to a specific product and a specific production period. Raw products from the facilities in question bear one of the establishment numbers inside a USDA mark of inspection or elsewhere on the package:

- P6137
- P6137A
- P7632

The products were mainly distributed to retail outlets in California, Oregon and Washington State.

For more information regarding the multistate outbreak of multidrug-resistant Salmonella Heidelberg infections linked to Foster Farms brand chicken, visit <http://www.cdc.gov/salmonella/heidelberg-10-13/index.html>.

TIPS FOR SAFE FOOD PREPARATION

Before you prepare food:

- Always wash your hands with warm water and soap before and after handling any food, especially raw meat, poultry, or seafood.
- When marinating for long periods of time, it is important to keep foods refrigerated. Don't use sauce that was used to marinate raw meat or poultry on cooked food.
- Keep raw foods, especially meat, poultry, or seafood, away from cooked foods. Do not use the same plate, tray, cutting board or utensils for raw and cooked foods.
- Keep meats, salads, and other perishable foods in the refrigerator until you are ready to use them. If you store your food in a cooler, keep the temperature at or below 40° F (4° C), and keep the lid closed as much as possible. Pack plenty of extra ice or freezer packs to insure a constant cold temperature. Store your cooler in the shade, away from birds and animals.
- Thoroughly wash fruits and vegetables, such as cantaloupe and watermelon, before consumption or cooking.

During cooking:

- Always check the temperature of the food before you stop cooking. Use a food thermometer to make sure food has reached a safe internal temperature. Additionally, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) recommends all cooked meats and poultry rest for three minutes before cutting to ensure optimum safety and quality.



- Beef, veal, lamb steaks, roasts: at least 145° F (63° C).
- Ground beef (hamburgers), ground pork: 160° F (71° C).
- All poultry, including ground meats: 165° F (74° C).
- Fish: 145° F (63° C); should be opaque and flake easily with a fork.
- Shrimp, lobster, crabs: 145 °F (62.8 °C); meat should be pearly and opaque.
- Clams, oysters, mussels: shells should be open when cooked. Discard shells that remain closed after cooking.

After cooking:

- Put cooked food on a clean plate or tray.
- Large batches of food that are prepared the day before, such as beans and potato salad, should be placed in shallow containers to quickly cool to 40° F (4° C) in the refrigerator.
- Don't use leftover marinade or sauce from the raw food on the cooked food.
- Keep all food covered to prevent cross contamination and to avoid attracting flies.
- Eat food as soon as it is ready.
- Leftovers should be placed in shallow containers, and refrigerated. Food may be covered when cool.
- Leftovers should be reheated to 165° F (74° C) before eating.
- Eat leftovers within two days.

For more information on food safety, check out <http://www.foodsafety.gov/>.

The Department of Public Health is committed to protecting and improving the health of the nearly 10 million residents of Los Angeles County. Through a variety of programs, community partnerships and services, Public Health oversees environmental health, disease control, and community and family health. Public Health comprises nearly 4,000 employees and has an annual budget exceeding \$750 million. To learn more about Public Health and the work we do please visit www.publichealth.lacounty.gov, visit our YouTube channel at www.youtube.com/lapublichealth, find us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/lapublichealth, or follow us on Twitter: @LAPublicHealth.

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