

## Public Advisory Note 15 Storage, Preparation and Cooking of Poultry

### INTRODUCTION

Poultry is a tasty, nourishing and good value for money meat. It can however present us with problems if we do not take care in its storage, preparation and cooking. Poultry is known to be associated with food poisoning infections and both caterers and the general public alike are reminded of the precautions that must be taken to reduce the risk of spreading or contracting the disease.

### BUYING YOUR POULTRY

Basically you can buy your poultry -

- **FRESH** - the bird should smell fresh; its flesh should give easily when pressed and any blood which shows should be deep red, not brown. Avoid birds which have an offensive smell or have a greenish tinge to their flesh. It is advisable to buy only from a reputable source.
- **CHILLED** - these birds are not deep frozen, and consequently they have only a short storage life of about 48 hours. After purchase, put the bird into a refrigerator as soon as possible - well away from, and below any cooked food - and cook within 48 hours.
- **DEEP FROZEN** - make sure that the pack is good and hard. One which is mushy may indicate inadequate freezing. Follow the manufacturers instructions regarding storage times, but if it is to be kept for a prolonged period in your deep-freeze ( at minus 18°C) get your bird into the freezer as soon as possible and certainly within one and a half hours of purchase.

**THAWING DEEP FROZEN POULTRY** - the purpose of cooking any food is not only to make it more digestible, but equally important, to kill any harmful germs. Deep - frozen poultry must be fully thawed to ensure that it can be safely and adequately cooked. Follow the manufacturers instructions.

In all cases please remember to remove the cellophane/plastic wrapping paper before commencing to thaw.

## REMEMBER

- you should only buy from reputable sources
- you should ensure that you keep fresh and chilled poultry in a refrigerator, *well away from, and below* any cooked food
- you should remove any packaging material and giblets before placing the poultry in the refrigerator.

## PREPARATION & COOKING

The giblets should be removed before the bird is cooked. Once the bird is in the oven it is very important that any working surfaces, utensils and equipment with which the raw poultry has come into contact, should be thoroughly cleaned. To do this properly you should -

- remove excess grease or spillage - this enable the detergent to work at its best
- wash thoroughly with hot water and detergent
- rinse off with a solution of a tablespoon of bleach to a gallon of hot water/or other suitable disinfectant
- after five minutes or so, rinse off with clean, cold water
- dry the surface using a clean cloth or disposable paper, and finally...
- wash your hands thoroughly.
- cooking time of 25 minutes per pound at 350°F ( Gas Mark 4 ) is recommended. Check how the cooking is progressing by using either a meat thermometer or by the colour of the juices - they should run clear when cooking is complete.

## AFTER THE COOKING

If you wish to cool your cooked poultry -

- remove it from any cooking liquid and put it on a clean plate or similar utensil
- cover it - with a clean cloth
- cool it in a cool, clean draughty place (not in a warm, steamy kitchen )
- it must be fully cooled and placed in a refrigerator within one and a half hours
- after cooling, refrigerate well away from, and above any raw food
- keep it in the refrigerator until required.

Any poultry meat leftovers which are to be reheated should be taken from the refrigerator and :

- reheated rapidly right through
- reheating must be thorough the food should be really hot (above 75°C centre temperature)
- the food must not be reheated more than once, because harmful germs could grow on the food during cooling, and of course, the food could lose its appetising taste and appearance.

## **10 GOLDEN RULES ON HANDLING POULTRY.**

1. Buy from a reputable source.
2. Keep poultry frozen until required.
3. Thaw poultry thoroughly before cooking and then cook as soon as possible.
4. Keep raw poultry away from cooked foods.
5. Immediately after handling poultry; wash your hands.
6. Cooked poultry should be allowed to cool quickly and then transferred to a refrigerator, when not required immediately.
7. Separate cooked and uncooked foods particularly in the refrigerator.
8. Do not use frozen poultry giblets for stock unless properly thawed and cooked.
9. Re-heating of poultry products or stock is not recommended.
- 10 Remember - Hands Carry Germs – Wash them

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