

FAMILY & CONSUMER SCIENCES

Handling Poultry Safely Christa Campbell, Elbert County FACS Agent

Did you know that September is National Food Safety Month? According to recent research, washing or rinsing your chicken is unnecessary, can increase your risk of becoming ill from bacteria, and finally the Partnership for Food Safety Education insists there is a better way than rinsing or washing your chicken! *Salmonella*, *Campylobacter* and other harmful bacteria live on raw chicken. Washing or rinsing doesn't remove this: worse, it helps the bacteria spread. When you add water through washing or rinsing, you give the bacteria a way to travel throughout your kitchen.

Today's poultry is already pretty clean. Our grandparents may have been cooking chicken that had some unsavory things on it, like waste or feathers. Today's manufacturing cleans the chicken, so there is no filth, feathers, or anything else on it that needs to be washed off. Poultry may have a coating of water and protein: this gets cooked off, or you can remove it with a clean paper towel. Anything that is on the chicken will get cooked off.

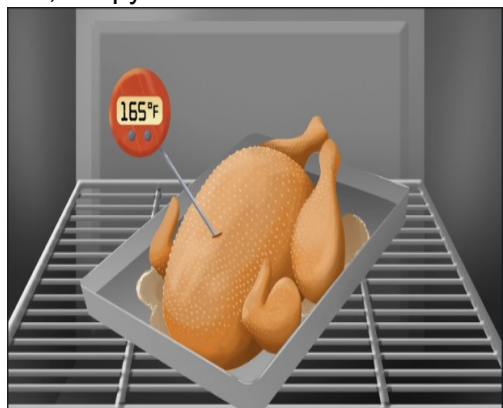
Safer steps to take when cooking chicken:

1. Use a clean paper towel.

If you see anything on the chicken you want to get rid of, wipe it off with a clean paper towel. Never rinse or wash chicken.

2. Raw chicken and juices should touch as few things as possible.

Separate raw chicken from fresh and ready-to-eat foods. Ready-to-eat foods are foods that are ready to eat and do not require any further cooking. Keep surfaces clean by washing them with hot, soapy water.



3. Cook it to 165 °F.

Cooking the chicken to 165 °F using a digital food thermometer will kill any dangerous bacteria, and make it safe to eat. The only way to know the temperature of the chicken you are cooking is by checking the temperature with a thermometer.

For more information about how to safely handle chicken from the store to your home as well as more about the science behind why you shouldn't wash or rinse your chicken...check out the links below.

<https://www.fightbac.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/Dont-Wing-It-Science-Behind-the-Messages.pdf>

<https://www.fightbac.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/Dont-Wing-It-Infographic.pdf>

<https://www.fightbac.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/Dont-Wing-It-Brochure-for-Parents.pdf>

Source: Partnership for Food Safety

<https://www.fightbac.org/cookbook/> link to three cookbooks that have food safety prompts written into the recipes.

<https://www.foodsafety.gov/food-safety-charts/meat-poultry-charts> this link is to provide consumers with what temperature to set their oven to as well as about how long the meat will take to cook per pound...you could link specifically to chicken & turkey