

Chief Medical Officer of Health Reminds People To Properly Handle And Cook Processed Chicken Products *Salmonella Cases On The Rise*

NEWS

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Ontario's Chief Medical Officer of Health, Dr. Arlene King, is reminding Ontarians about the importance of properly handling and cooking processed chicken products, following an increase in cases of Salmonellosis.

There has been a rise in the number of cases of *Salmonella* Enteritidis across the province. Although the source is still under investigation, a contributing factor is believed to be improper handling of food in the home, including inadequate cooking of breaded, processed chicken products, such as chicken strips, burgers and nuggets.

These products are often sold frozen. They may be either raw or partially cooked, and breaded or non-breaded. Although they may look like a cooked product, they have not been heat treated to destroy bacteria such as *Salmonella* and should be considered a raw chicken product. Contact with other foods and surfaces (such as kitchen counters) should be avoided to prevent bacteria from spreading. These products should be cooked until a minimum internal temperature of 74C (165F) has been reached. This temperature needs to be reached to effectively destroy *Salmonella*.

To reduce the risk of *Salmonella* in processed chicken products, it's important to:

- Read and follow proper cooking and handling instructions on the package
- Avoid cooking raw or partially cooked processed chicken products in the microwave as this may not provide even heat distribution
- Treat uncooked processed chicken products as raw chicken – keep them away from ready-to-eat foods to avoid contamination. Wash your hands thoroughly before and after handling the products
- Avoid leaving already cooked chicken nuggets, strips and burgers at room temperature for extended periods of time, for example in packed lunches. Cooked products should be eaten immediately or put in a refrigerator at temperatures below 4C (40F). After being in the refrigerator, they should be reheated to a minimum internal temperature of 74C (165F) before eating.

QUOTES

"*Salmonella* can cause serious illness and, in rare cases, death among the very young, elderly and those with weakened immune systems arising from chronic medical conditions. People need to remember to properly handle and cook these raw, processed chicken products."

-- Dr. Arlene King, Ontario's Chief Medical Officer of Health

QUICK FACTS

- *Salmonella* Enteritidis is a form of *Salmonella* that causes gastroenteritis in humans

- Symptoms of salmonellosis may include nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal cramps and fever
- *Salmonella* can cause serious and sometimes fatal infections in some people, such as children, the elderly and those with weakened immune systems
- Symptoms of salmonellosis generally occur within 6 to 72 hours after exposure to contaminated food and may last 2 to 5 days.

LEARN MORE

Find out more about [Salmonella](#) online.

Contact your local [public health unit](#).

Media Contacts:
Andrew Morrison, Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, 416-314-6197

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