

UK issues dire warning on washing chicken

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British authorities advised consumers on Monday against washing chicken saying that, contrary to common belief, the practice could lead to food poisoning.

The stern warning was aimed at the 44 percent of Britons who wash raw chicken before cooking it, according to a survey by the British Food Safety Authority (FSA).

Washing [raw chicken](#) can spread campylobacter bacteria, the most common cause of [food poisoning](#) in Britain—though just 28 percent of the 4,540 adults surveyed had heard of it.

The most common reasons given for washing chicken were the belief that it removes dirt and bacteria, and because it was a family tradition.

In fact, the practice can spread the [dangerous bacteria](#) onto hands, clothing and surfaces, the FSA said.

The food body has made the campaign against washing chicken the focus of its 2014 Food Safety Week, writing an open letter to cooking show producers to ask them to stop the washing of chicken on TV.

Campylobacter can cause abdominal pain, severe diarrhoea and vomiting, and in some cases death. Those most at risk are children and older people.

Poultry is the main source of the Campylobacter, which can also cause

Guillain-Barre syndrome, which can leave victims paralysed.

"Campylobacter is a serious issue. Not only can it cause severe illness and death, but it costs the economy hundreds of millions of pounds a year as a result of [sickness absence](#)," FSA Chief Executive Catherine Brown said.

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