

Use wipes in the kitchen to reduce risk of food poisoning by 99 percent

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Consumers can reduce the risk of *Campylobacter* food poisoning by up to 99.2% by using disinfectant wipes in the kitchen after preparing poultry. This is according to research published today (Friday 01 May) in the Society for Applied Microbiology's *Journal of Applied Microbiology*.

Dr Gerardo Lopez and his colleagues at the University of Arizona in the USA used antibacterial wipes on typical counter top materials - granite, laminate, and ceramic tile - to see if they reduce the [risk](#) of the cook and their family or guests ingesting [harmful bacteria](#).

The results from Dr Lopez's experiments, along with information from other studies that examine the transfer of bacteria from food, to surfaces and hands, and ultimately to the mouth, were fed into a computer to calculate the potential reduction in risk of infection from using disinfectant wipes. The result was a reduction in the annual risk of *Campylobacter* jejuni infection of up to 99.2%, reducing the risk from 2:10 to 2:1000.

The factors included in the study are a good representation of a typical scenario in any UK or USA home kitchen.

Dr Lopez said "The scary thing about *Campylobacter* is that you really don't need to ingest that many bacteria to get a nasty illness, so we have to wipe clean our kitchen surfaces and wash our hands after preparing poultry."

Consumers in the UK have recently heard that it is more likely than not that raw poultry bought from the supermarket will have been contaminated with *Campylobacter*.

Campylobacter infections are common, causing vomiting and diarrhoea, and can be very dangerous for young children, older people, and anyone with a compromised immune system.

Even though cooking the meat thoroughly, until the juices run clear, will destroy the bacteria, there is still a chance that bacteria left behind in the preparation area could cause illness. Advice to [consumers](#) includes refraining from washing poultry under the tap, which can spread the bacteria through splashing and spraying.

This new research suggests that cleaning up with a disinfectant wipe straight after unwrapping and/or preparing poultry meat could further protect people from infection.

Dr Lopez explained "We found that it's not just the physical removal of bacteria by the wipe that helps - the antibacterial solution left behind on the counter surface continues to disinfect over the next few minutes.

"It's also important that consumers clean up with a wipe straight after preparing poultry. If drips and splatters from the meat remain, bacteria can transfer to other foods from dirty surfaces and utensils. If the area is allowed to dry, the bacteria can sometimes stick to the work surface making it even harder to get clean, later."

There is every chance that disinfectant wipes would also be effective to reduce the risk of other food poisoning illnesses, including those caused by E.coli, Salmonella, and noroviruses.

"We tested our hands after using the wipes to clean up - we wanted to

see if there was a chance of directly ingesting bacteria from the preparation area via hand-to-mouth contact. Though they were very effective, it's still really important to wash your hands properly - any [bacteria](#) getting into your mouth could make you really ill," Dr Lopez advised.

For the greatest protection, wipes need to be used to disinfect all surfaces that might have been splashed or sprayed - that might include the sink and taps, counter tops, and stove top.

It can even make a difference just to stop using the same cloth, sponge, or towel for all purposes and instead use a different disposable wipe or paper towel for each clean-up.

The same University of Arizona team has also looked at the potential for cross contamination via reusable grocery bags and suggest keeping bags for raw meat separate from other bags that might be used for fruit and veg and ready-to-eat products and to wash them regularly.

The next stage in Dr Lopez's research will be to look at how effective pre-applied disinfectants are on surfaces that come into contact with norovirus, the so-called 'winter vomiting bug'.

Provided by Wiley

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