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Hygiene for chicken eggs - protection from Campylobacter

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Campylobacter is a species of spiral bacteria which are widespread in the gut of warm-blooded animals, especially poultry. Whereas the germ usually has no effect on livestock, it can lead to an infectious bowel inflammation in humans. The result is stomach ache, diarrhoea and fever and in exceptional circumstances, autoimmune disease, such as rheumatoid arthritis.

Roughly 70,000 cases of intestinal inflammation through *Campylobacter* are reported every year. This makes it the most commonly registered food-related bacterial disease in Germany, with a slightly increasing tendency expected. About 50 to 80% of all cases can be attributed to chickens as the reservoir of *Campylobacter*.

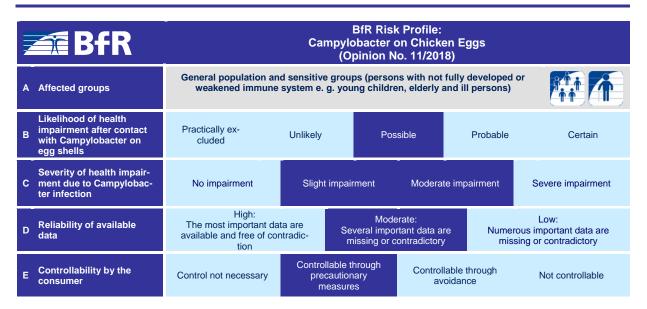
Fresh poultry meat is the most frequent source of human *Campylobacter* infections, but chicken eggs can also transmit *Campylobacter* to humans, especially if they are visibly contaminated with chicken excrement. The risk of infection through eggs can be minimised by taking the following measures, however.

Chicken excrement can adhere to the shell of chicken eggs during production and packaging. The probability of contamination should be reduced by taking suitable measures, such as ensuring good stable hygiene, advises the German Federal Institute for Risk Assessment (BfR) in its opinion on the subject "Campylobacter on chicken eggs". It recommends that consumers store raw chicken eggs separately from other foods, that they thoroughly clean kitchen utensils after contact with eggshell and raw eggs and that they wash their hands thoroughly after touching chicken eggs.

Only clean chicken eggs should be used for the production of raw egg dishes. As a general rule, eggs and egg dishes should only be eaten after being properly heated to protect especially sensitive groups against food infections such as persons whose body defences are not fully developed (small children) or weakened due to advanced age or previous illness.



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Boxes highlighted in dark blue indicate the properties of the risk assessed in this opinion.

This text version is a translation of the original German text which is the only legally binding version.

The full version of this BfR opinion is available in German on: http://www.bfr.bund.de/cm/343/nahrungsergaenzungsmittel-mit-anthranoidhaltigen-aloeganzblattzubereitungen-bergen-gesundheitliche-risiken.pdf

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