



FACT SHEET

Avian Influenza: It's not in your food

People who enjoy the great taste and health benefits of eating poultry, and have heard about avian influenza in foreign countries, have no need to worry about food safety. Poultry products purchased in Texas and throughout the U.S. are safe for consumption. **You can't get avian influenza from properly handled and cooked food.** The most important thing you can do is learn the facts and get informed of how you can protect yourself and your family.

Avian influenza in birds comes in several different types. There are milder forms, as well as more serious types known as Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI). These more severe strains result in high mortality in poultry. The current strain found in Asia is H5N1 HPAI or "Asian bird flu." **We do not have "Asian bird flu" in Texas or anywhere in the U.S., and we have never had it.** In addition, the U.S. has never imported poultry from Asia, where most of the cases of "Asian bird flu" have occurred.

Furthermore, the **U.S. Department of Agriculture confirms that proper handling and cooking of poultry provides protection against the avian influenza, as it does against other viruses and bacteria.** Microorganisms of all kinds are destroyed when the product reaches an internal temperature of 160 degrees Fahrenheit. The heat of normal cooking destroys the virus that causes avian influenza. The following chart provides the temperature to which your food is not only safe, but is the best quality:

- Boneless breast: 160 degrees F
- Bone-in chicken and turkey white meat: 170 degrees F
- Chicken and turkey dark meat: 180 degrees F
- Ground chicken and turkey: 165 degrees F
- Eggs: 160 degrees F

To ensure the safe consumption and quality of poultry products, it is important to follow the usual precautions when handling or eating poultry products:

- Keep poultry products refrigerated or frozen until ready to cook.
- Thaw poultry products in a refrigerator or microwave.
- Keep raw meat and poultry separate from other foods.
- Wash working surfaces (including cutting boards and countertops), utensils and hands thoroughly after touching raw meat or poultry.
- Cook all poultry products thoroughly (use guideline above).
- Keep hot foods hot.
- Refrigerate or discard leftovers immediately.

If dangerous types of avian influenza should occur in Texas or anywhere else in the U.S., strict controls are in place to provide for immediate eradication that include destroying and disposing, through environmentally sound methods, any flock in which dangerous strains of avian influenza are found. They would not be sold for use as food. No special precautions need to be taken by consumers because of any fears about avian influenza.