

Preventing Salmonella

Having a BBQ with our family and friends is enjoyable. Let's keep it safe: one tiny forgetful step during a BBQ can turn the event into a disaster.

It is well known that raw chicken has the potential of carrying *Salmonella* species. Salmonellosis disease remains a serious public health challenge. *Salmonella* has been implicated in a wide range of food, both vegetable and animal products. Vegetables such as sprouts, spinach along with poultry, raw meats and eggs are commonly associated with *Salmonella*.

Director of Microbiology Elena Connors, working with bacteria every day, has been alert to any suspicion of mishandling of food just like a true "germ detective".

During the BBQ, a question came into her mind and she decided to investigate it. How harmful could it be to place the cooked chicken on the same plate used for raw chicken?

The plate used for raw chicken was swabbed and *Salmonella* test was carried out. The final results were negative for *Salmonella* on a number of samples tested.

Although Salmonella was not found, hazardously high counts of bacteria were present.

Must admit, Elena Connors says, it is a relief that *Salmonella* was not found. However, the heavy bacterial growth present alone could have gotten someone very ill, especially a child, an older person or someone with a low immune system.

The cooked chicken placed on the plate with raw material is not safe to consume. Always use a dry, clean plate for ready to eat product.

By Elena Connors - Impact Microbiology Services Ltd

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