

***Campylobacter* spp. in duck breast**

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Tests by several *Land* control agencies detected *Campylobacter* spp. on several occasions in duck breast samples. In humans the germ can cause severe foodborne infections with symptoms like diarrhoea and vomiting. The bacterium is typically found on poultry meat in particular. In 2005 the Robert Koch Institute recorded for the first time more *Campylobacter* than *Salmonella* infections in Germany. The Federal Institute for Risk Assessment (BfR) assesses below the health risk for consumers of developing campylobacteriosis after eating duck breast. Furthermore, the Institute offers tips about what consumers should pay attention to when preparing meat.

Only limited data are available on the incidence of *Campylobacter* specifically in duck meat. Frequently, the data tend rather to record the incidence of the microorganism in general in poultry meat. Based on the available studies it can be assumed that around 40 % of all cases of *Campylobacter* disease can be attributed to the consumption of poultry meat. Case control studies that can be used to reliably estimate the importance of poultry for the transmission of *Campylobacter* to humans are not available so far.

Campylobacter are detected most frequently on the surface of duck breast which means that searing of the meat will kill most of the heat-sensitive germs. In individual cases *Campylobacter* are also detected inside the meat. Their inactivation is not guaranteed in the case of the customary way of preparing duck breast which involves searing at low temperatures for a short time as the necessary core temperature of at least 74 °C is not achieved for a sufficiently long period. The searing process merely reduces the risk of infection. Refrigeration and freezing cannot reliably kill the *Campylobacter* either.

BfR is of the opinion that the risk of cross-contamination constitutes a higher health risk than the consumption of inadequately cooked poultry meat. The source of cross-contamination is not only the raw poultry meat itself but also the packaging that is contaminated with germs.

BfR recommends to consumers that they should heat duck breast for at least 10 minutes at temperatures above 74 °C and they should pay attention to the other rules of food and kitchen hygiene like clean hands and work surfaces in order to avoid the cross-contamination of ready-to-eat foods like, for instance, salads.

The full version of this BfR Opinion is available in German on http://www.bfr.bund.de/cm/208/campylobacter_spp_in_entenbrust.pdf