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Research alliance for a better understanding of rodent-borne diseases

In the “RoBoPub” research alliance, scientists have been working since 2017 on generating more knowledge about diseases transmitted by rodents, such as leptospirosis and hantavirus infections. RoBoPub stands for rodent-borne pathogens and public health. The BfR’s partners in the alliance are the Friedrich-Loeffler-Institute and public health services, as well as university and non-university research institutions. The Federal Ministry of Education and Research is funding this third party project. At the BfR, the consultant laboratory for leptospires is conducting research on pathogen-, rodent- and environment-related aspects of pathogen transmission and diagnosis of the disease in humans. The results are incorporated into the BfR risk assessments, as well as into the development of health recommendations. Leptospirosis is a febrile illness which is transferred to humans by rodents in particular. The symptoms of the disease are non-specific and in general similar to those of flu. However, in some cases infection results into a life-threatening illness.

Disinfection of slaughtering plants: New methods not very effective

The slaughter of poultry poses a challenge to hygiene. In order to prevent that bacteria from the viscera of the slaughter animals depose on the surface of the equipment and spread to the poultry meat increasing numbers of innovative disinfection methods are being used. They take effect with short application times and low concentrations. A laboratory method was developed at the BfR to test the efficacy of these methods. The method simulates short application times, low ambient temperatures and moist, soiled surfaces. The goal was to find out whether antibiotic resistant *E. coli* can be killed off under these conditions. If this were the case, disinfection after every slaughtered carcass would make good sense without stopping the conveyor. It transpired, however, that the examined bacteria were only killed off to a slight degree under these conditions despite very high concentrations of disinfectant.



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Maximum daily level for magnesium in food supplements

People who consume magnesium as a food supplement should not take more than 250 milligrams per day divided up into at least two portions. After evaluating new nutrition studies, the BfR hereby confirms its recommendations of the year 2004. Accordingly, no negative effects have been observed up to now regarding the uptake of magnesium via conventional foods by healthy persons. If magnesium is ingested additionally, however, as a food supplement, and these products exceed certain daily intake quantities, mild cases of diarrhoea may result. Magnesium is an essential mineral which plays an important role in numerous metabolic processes, as well as in bone mineralisation and in muscle contraction. In general, a balanced and varied diet with plenty of fruits and vegetables supplies a healthy body with all essential nutrients.

More information:
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