



# Chicken Liver Pâté

A Safer Method



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This leaflet is produced by Environmental Health, Craven  
District Council. July 2013



## What is the issue?

Unlike whole pieces of red meat such as steak, where microbial contamination is restricted to the external surfaces, chicken livers can be contaminated with *Campylobacter* on both the inside tissues and the outer surfaces of the liver.

*Campylobacter* is an organism which can cause food poisoning, and on poultry meats the levels of the organism are higher than on other meats. To ensure that cooked chicken livers are safe for eating, appropriate controls are needed to reduce the risk of infection, without tainting the quality of the product.

## What can go wrong?

Outbreaks of campylobacteriosis have occurred as a result of restaurants serving undercooked chicken livers and chicken liver pate.

Examples of control breakdowns have included:

- Undercooking of livers, allowing bacteria to survive. There is a belief that livers will become dry and unpalatable if cooked too long
- Poor separation, allowing cross contamination from raw livers to cooked product
- Poor hygiene, allowing re-contamination of cooked product by bacteria from hands, knives and unclean surfaces.

## How can I tell if product is contaminated?

Studies have shown that chicken livers are frequently naturally contaminated by *Campylobacter* on external surfaces and internal tissues. This contamination will not adversely affect the look or smell of chicken livers.

## What can I do to protect the customer?

Sauté livers in small batches to allow for effective cooking

Sauté livers for at least 5 minutes or until an internal temperature of 75°C has been reached and maintained for 2-3 minutes

Use a food thermometer to check the internal temperature of the largest liver in the batch

Chicken livers should be cooked until they are no longer cloudy in the core. It is recommended to cook the pate in a Bain Marie in the oven and ensure the temperature necessary is reached. Colour is not a reliable indicator of effective cooking. Studies have shown that liver tissue can remain pink after it has reached a safe temperature.

Once cooked, cool for a short period of time (up to one hour), cover with cling film, then refrigerate

Ensure juice from uncooked chicken livers does not leak onto other foods.

Scrub cutting boards, knives and other utensils that have come in contact with raw livers using hot water and detergent and allow them to dry

Preferably use a separate board and utensils for preparing poultry.

## How long should I keep the pate for?

For high risk food the recommended shelf life is the day of production + two days under refrigerated control (less than 8°C). If you hold food for longer than this you must be able to demonstrate that this food is safe.