

Fact: Rinsing chicken in a colander will not remove bacteria. In fact, it can spread raw juices around your sink, onto your countertops, and onto ready-to-eat foods. Bacteria in raw meat and poultry can only be killed when cooked to a safe minimum internal temperature, which for poultry is 165 °F, as measured by a food thermometer. Save yourself the messiness of rinsing raw poultry. It is not a safety step and can cause cross-contamination.

- **Myth: Once a hamburger turns brown in the middle, it is fully cooked.**

Fact: You cannot use visual cues to determine whether food has been cooked to a safe minimum internal temperature. The ONLY way to know that food has been cooked to a safe minimum internal temperature is to use a food thermometer. Ground meat should be cooked to a safe minimum internal temperature of 160 °F, as measured by a food thermometer.

- **Myth: You should not put hot food in the refrigerator.**

Fact: Hot foods can be placed directly in the refrigerator. A large pot of food like soup or stew should be divided into small portions and put in shallow containers for quicker cooling in the refrigerator. If you leave food out to cool and forget about it, then toss it! Bacteria grow rapidly in the “danger zone” between 40 °F and 140 °F. Always follow the “two hour rule” for cooked foods – eat them or refrigerate them within two hours at a refrigerator temperature of 40 °F or below. And, if left out in a room or outdoors where the temperature is 90 °F or above, food should be refrigerated or eaten within just 1 hour – or discarded.

“People want to do the right thing to reduce risk of foodborne illness to themselves and their families,” said Shelley Feist, PFSE’s Executive Director. “By highlighting common food safety myths, the Partnership hopes to raise awareness with consumers of the facts behind the four core Fight BAC!® messages of Clean, Separate, Cook, and Chill.” Foodborne illness comes with an expensive price tag, not only in terms of human suffering, but also associated health costs and lost productivity.

Educational materials including a video, teacher materials, and other consumer-friendly tools are available for free download at www.fightbac.org.

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The Partnership for Food Safety Education works to save lives and improve public health through research-based, actionable consumer food safety initiatives that reduce foodborne illness. PFSE unites representatives from industry associations, professional societies in food science, and nutrition and health consumer groups, the United States Department of Agriculture, the Environmental Protection Agency, the Department of Health and Human Services, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the Food and Drug Administration in an important initiative to educate the public about preventing foodborne illness.