

Virus transmission (H5N8) from poultry food consumption is unlikely

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Cases of highly pathogenic avian influenza (fowl plaque, often also referred to as bird flu) have been found in wild birds and poultry in Germany, in most cases caused by a virus of the H5N8 subtype. According to the current state of scientific knowledge, it is unlikely that the pathogen can be transmitted to humans via food.

In the past, direct contact with infected live poultry was almost exclusively responsible for the transmission of other avian influenza viruses from birds to humans. Direct contact with the animals is also assumed to be the cause of the transmission of the H5N8 subtype to employees of a poultry farm in Russia, which has now been proven for the first time according to press reports. Cases of human-to-human transmission have not been identified. Influenza viruses can cause respiratory diseases in humans and are mainly transmitted through airborne droplet infections. So far, there is no evidence that humans can be infected by raw eggs or raw sausage products containing poultry meat from infected animals. As a matter of principle, compliance with hygiene rules when handling and preparing raw poultry meat and poultry meat products should be ensured, also with regard to other pathogens that may be present.

The following general hygiene guidelines apply:

- Store and prepare raw poultry products and other foods separately, especially if the latter are not reheated.
- Thoroughly clean equipment and surfaces that have come into contact with raw poultry products with warm water and detergent additive.
- Packaging materials, defrost water, etc. dispose of immediately.
- Wash hands with warm water and soap.
- Cook poultry meals thoroughly. This means that a core temperature of 70 °C must be reached for at least 2 minutes.
- Eggs should be cooked before consumption until the egg whites and egg yolks are firm, i.e. for at least 6 minutes depending on size.

More information about bird flu

Further information from the BfR is available here (in German):

<https://www.bfr.bund.de/de/vogelgrippe-2407.html>

More information on the subject of bird flu can be found on the websites of the Friedrich Loeffler Institute (www.fli.de), the Robert Koch Institute (www.rki.de) and the Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture (www.bmel.de).

The BfR has previously published additional information on avian influenza viruses: [Frequently Asked Questions on food hygiene in conjunction with bird flu](#)

A [video clip entitled "How to prepare chicken?"](#) detailing how poultry should be handled in the kitchen is available on the BfR website.



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