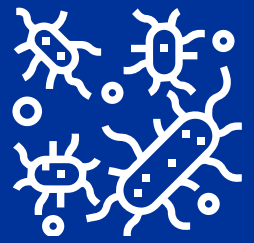


Campylobacter detections in ready-to-eat chicken products

LHAAC Coordinated Sampling Project (CSP) 38



Project outline:

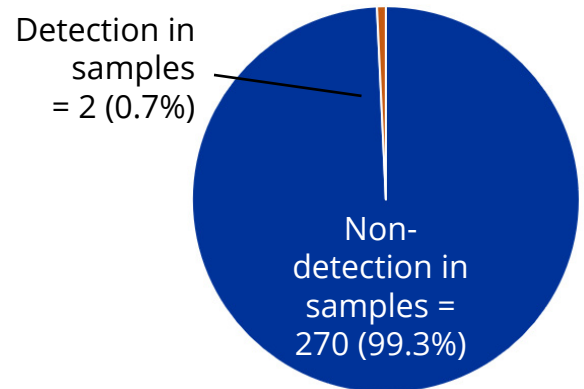
This project examined the food safety of chicken products from WA food businesses such as delis, lunch bars, fast food chains and petrol stations, to help formulate future interventions to reduce campylobacteriosis cases.

What's the risk?

Campylobacter bacteria is the most prevalent source of food-borne illness in WA, with over 4,000 notified cases in 2022¹.

Approximately 80% of Australian campylobacteriosis cases in 2017 - 2019 were attributed to eating chicken².

Of 272 samples, 270 or 99.3% did not have *E.coli* or *Campylobacter* detected.



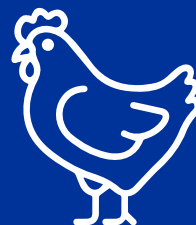
∇ The two positive samples ∇

Product:
Slightly cooked chicken

Bacteria detected:
Campylobacter

This product was treated as a cooked product and stored in a bain marie with other food, although separated. It was intended to be fully cooked before serving.

Testing of the cooked chicken product and other bain marie products did not yield detections for *Campylobacter*. The LGA reviewed the business's procedures and educated them to reduce the risk of cross-contamination.



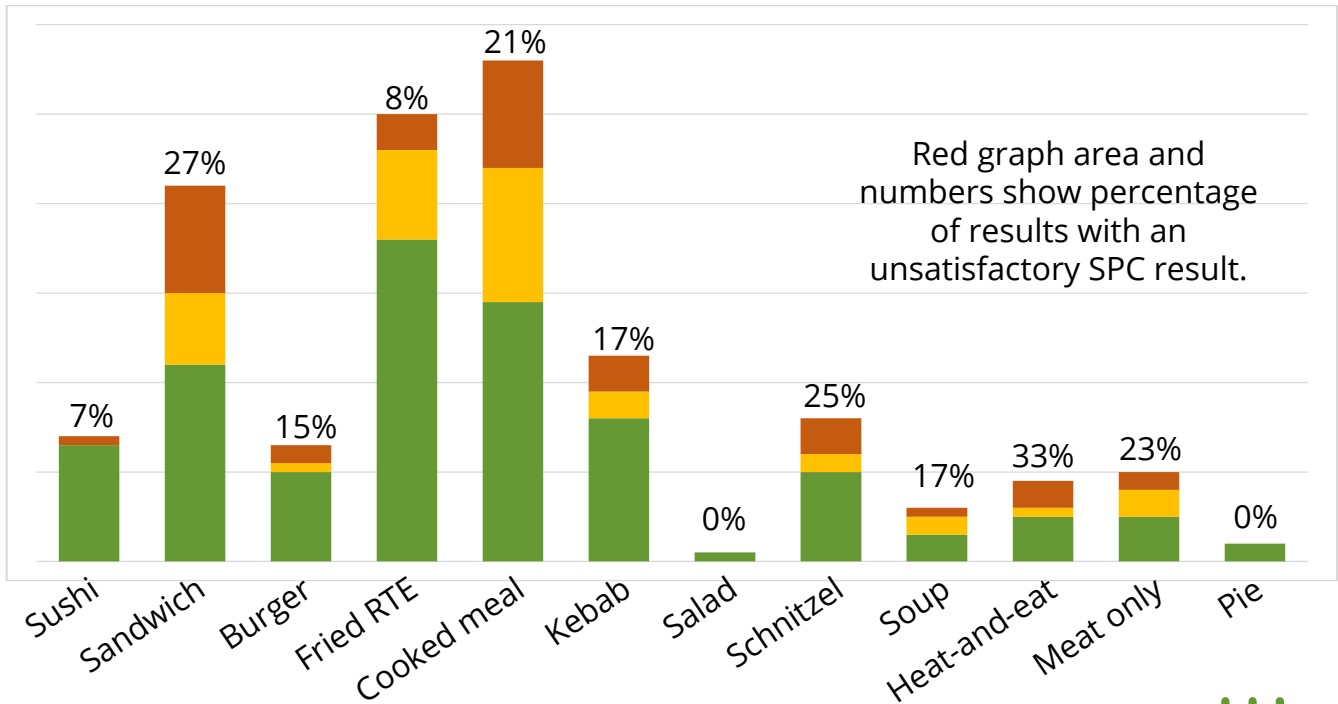
Product:
Chicken katsu sushi

Bacteria detected:
E.coli

The business selling the sushi was 'undescribed' in the CSP results, however the LGA received the detection outcome and made contact to follow up.



Standard plate count (SPC) results by food category



Heat-and-eat (33%), sandwiches (27%) and schnitzel (25%) products were most likely to have unsatisfactory SPC results.



Excludes seven samples with unknown food categories

Key findings:

- This CSP was encouraging, with 99.3% of samples resulting in non-detection of pathogenic microbes (of those tested for in the survey).
- Further studies are needed to determine the sources of *Campylobacter* contamination in food.
- SPC is used to test the microbiological quality of foods, however raw fruits and vegetables, and fermented, dairy and baked goods have high SPC counts due to the microbial flora naturally present or used in manufacturing processes³. In the context of this CSP, the unsatisfactory high SPC results are highly likely to be non-pathogenic yeasts, lactobacilli and other food-related microbes.

Thanks to our participating LGAs:

- City of Armadale
- Shire of Augusta Margaret River
- City of Bayswater
- City of Belmont
- Shire of Boddington
- City of Bunbury
- City of Busselton
- Town of Cambridge
- City of Canning
- Shire of Capel
- Town of Claremont
- City of Cockburn
- Shire of Collie
- Shire of Donnybrook-Balingup
- City of Fremantle
- City of Gosnells
- Shire of Harvey
- City of Joondalup
- City of Kalamunda
- City of Kalgoorlie-Boulder
- City of Karratha
- City of Kwinana
- City of Mandurah
- Shire of Manjimup
- City of Melville
- Shire of Mundaring
- City of Nedlands
- City of Perth
- Shire of Plantagenet
- Town of Port Hedland
- City of Rockingham
- Shire of Serpentine Jarrahdale
- City of Stirling
- City of Subiaco
- City of Swan
- Town of Victoria Park
- City of Vincent
- City of Wanneroo
- Shire of Waroona

Complete report is available at:
www.lhaac.org.au/

Contact LHAAC for more information:
lhaac@ecu.edu.au



References:

1. Department of Health. (2023). *Foodborne Illness Reduction Strategy 2023-2026*.
2. McLure et al. (2023). *Source attribution of campylobacteriosis in Australia, 2017-2019*.
3. FSANZ. (2022). *Compendium of Microbiological Criteria for Food*.