

## Processed Chicken Products Need to be Handled Safely

Today's busy families may choose to add processed chicken products as part of a speedy meal. These products are often sold frozen and may be either raw or partially cooked. Although they may look cooked, these products have not been cooked to a temperature high enough to destroy bacteria such as Salmonella and should be considered a raw chicken product.

**To reduce the risk of Salmonella in processed chicken products, it is important to:**

- Read and follow proper cooking and handling instructions on the package. Raw chicken should be cooked so that the minimum internal temperature of the product is 74°C (165°F). This is the temperature needed to effectively destroy Salmonella. Cooking temperatures can be easily checked using a food probe thermometer available at most grocery and hardware stores.
- Avoid cooking raw or partially cooked processed chicken products in the microwave. Microwaves do not always heat food evenly and may leave undercooked areas.
- Treat uncooked processed chicken products as raw chicken – keep them away from ready-to-eat foods to avoid cross-contamination. Wash your hands thoroughly and disinfect countertops after handling the products.
- Avoid leaving already cooked chicken nuggets, strips and burgers at room temperature for long periods of time, for example in packed lunches. Cooked products should be eaten immediately or put in the refrigerator at 4°C (40°F). To be safe, it is recommended that leftover chicken products from the refrigerator be reheated to a minimum internal temperature of 74°C (165°F) before eating.