

## Warm weather allows germs to thrive in kitchen

The warmer weather always means more cases of food poisoning -- remember the kitchen sink can contain 100,000 times more germs than the bathroom.

Germs such as E coli, campylobacter and salmonella enter the kitchen on our hands, raw food and through our pets.

Our hands are the main way germs are spread, so it's important to wash them thoroughly with soap and warm water before cooking and after touching raw meat.

Raw meat, including poultry, contains harmful bacteria that can spread easily to anything it touches. This includes other food, worktops, tables, chopping boards and knives.

Take particular care to keep raw meat away from ready-to-eat foods such as bread, salad and fruit. These foods won't be cooked before you eat them so any germs that get on to them won't be killed.

Use different chopping boards for raw and ready-to-eat foods.

Don't eat poultry, pork, burgers, sausages, rolled joints of meat or kebabs rare.

When cooking burgers, sausages, chicken and pork, cut into the middle to check that the meat is no longer pink and that it's piping hot (steam is coming out).

When cooking a whole chicken or other bird, pierce the thickest part of the leg to check that the juices are no longer pink or red.

To check pork joints are ready to eat, put a skewer into the centre of the meat and check that the juices are no longer pink or red.

It's safe to serve steak and other whole cuts of beef and lamb rare (not cooked in the middle) or blue (seared on the outside) as long as they have been properly sealed.

If you've cooked food that you're not going to eat immediately, cool it at room temperature and then store it in the fridge.

Wash all worktops and chopping boards before and after cooking as they are sources of germ cross-contamination.

The average kitchen chopping board has around 200pc more faecal bacteria on it than the average toilet seat.

Damp sponges and cloths are the perfect place for bacteria to breed. Studies have shown the kitchen sponge to have the highest number of germs in the home. Wash and replace kitchen cloths and tea towels frequently.

