

# Chicken Dishes with Post-cooking Handling (Applicable to Poached Chicken and Shredded chicken)

Food Safety Guidelines for the Trade



# Introduction and scope

Poached chicken and shredded chicken are popular dishes in Hong Kong. The chicken is prepared by immersing the raw chicken into hot water until it is cooked. Cooked chicken may be chopped or shredded for preparing different dishes in which manual handling is involved. Furthermore, these dishes may be left under ambient conditions and served in non-hot style. The processing practices of chicken may make it susceptible to microbial growth and post-processing contamination.

In order to ensure poached chicken and shredded chicken produced and sold are wholesome and safe, the trade is advised to adopt the following measures:

## Food safety measures

### Purchase and storage of raw chickens

1

- Obtain raw chickens from approved and reliable sources.
- Inspect the storage conditions and temperature of raw chickens as well as relevant documents before acceptance to verify that there is no sign or indication of contamination.
- Retain purchasing invoice to facilitate product tracing.
- Keep raw chickens at 4°C or below if they are not used immediately and separate it from ready-to-eat food. Raw chickens should be covered and placed in the lower compartment of the refrigerator. Ready-to-eat food should be covered and placed in the upper compartment of the refrigerator. Ideally, use separate refrigerators to store raw chickens and ready-to-eat food.



## 2

## Preparation

- Estimate the demand for chickens carefully to avoid over-production and prevent prolonged storage of cooked chicken at room temperature.
- Frozen chicken meat should be defrosted thoroughly before cooking, otherwise the food may be cooked on the outside with the inside undercooked and pathogens may not be killed. Frozen food can be defrosted by keeping in a refrigerator or under tap water. If a refrigerator is used, frozen food should be kept in the refrigerator for one day to allow gradual defrosting in a low temperature environment. If tap water is chosen, the water should be changed regularly or kept running.
- The preparation areas for raw food, including the sink for defrosting, should be separated from areas for handling of ready-to-eat foods. If washing raw meat and poultry is necessary, the sink and its surrounding areas should be thoroughly cleaned after the washing process to prevent cross-contamination.
- Implement suitable timetables for individual chicken production processes to minimise storage times under room temperature.

## 3

## Cooking (Including Poaching)

- Cook thoroughly:
  - The centre of the thickest part of the chicken should reach at least 75°C. Measure the core temperature with a thermometer.
  - Ensure that the juices are clear and not red in colour, and blood is not visible when cutting the cooked chicken.



## 4

## Cooling

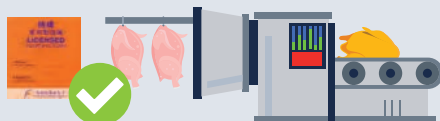
- Cool cooked chicken from 60°C to 20°C within 2 hours or less.
- Use potable water to cool cooked chicken.



# Food safety measures for obtaining cooked chicken from food factories or other sources

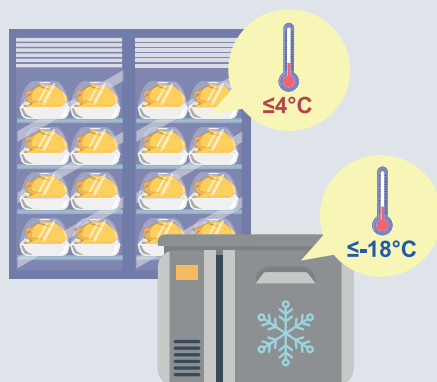
## Purchase and transportation of cooked chicken

- Obtain cooked chickens from licensed and reliable food factories or other approved sources.



- Inspect ready-to-eat chickens before acceptance to make sure that:

- they are within the “use by” date;
- there is no sign of contamination or damage to the packaging; and
- chilled/frozen ready-to-eat chickens arrive at the appropriate temperatures (e.g. frozen items at  $-18^{\circ}\text{C}$  or below and chilled items at  $4^{\circ}\text{C}$  or below) and are free from signs of temperature abuse.



- Use appropriate and clean vehicles to transport cooked chickens. During transportation, cooked chickens should be protected properly from cross-contamination and maintained at appropriate temperatures with records.



- Retain purchasing invoice to facilitate product tracing.



# Food safety measures for preparation of cooked chickens in shops

## 1

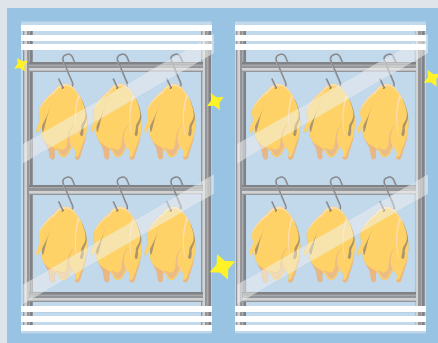
## Preparation of cooked chickens

- Shorten the handling time of cooked chicken meat without temperature control and keep records to indicate the duration.
- If cooked chicken meat has been held at room temperature for more than 2 hours but less than 4 hours, they should be used within the 4-hour limit but cannot be returned to the refrigerator. For shredded chicken prepared for later use, cooked chicken should be processed to shredded chicken within 2 hours before placing in the fridge.
- Keep records and adhere to the time/temperature requirements, especially for the handling of ready-to-eat ingredients.
- Keep only an appropriate amount of cooked chicken meat, whether mixed with sauces or other ingredients or not, on the preparation counter. Ready-to-eat chicken meat should be covered and stored at 4°C or below.
- Divide prepared chicken dishes in smaller portions for storage in the refrigerator and only take out the amount as required.
- Storage of raw food and cooked chickens in close proximity inside the same refrigerator should be avoided. Raw food should be placed below cooked chickens or other ready-to-eat food in the refrigerator to prevent juices from dripping onto cooked/ready-to-eat food.
- Packaged sauces for the mixing with cooked chicken must be properly stored according to manufacturers' directions, especially after opening.
- Packaged cooked chickens should be used as soon as possible after opening. The shelf life of packaged cooked chickens would be shortened after opening, especially when the chicken meat is further handled or processed, e.g. when used for the preparation of shredded chicken.

# Holding and display

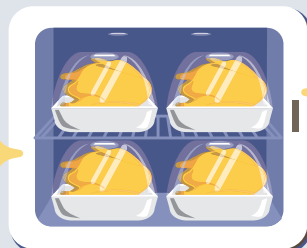
2

- During display, keep poached chicken in an insect and dust-proof showcase.
- Keep records to indicate how long the cooked chickens have been stored at room temperature after cooling.
- If the cooked chickens are held at room temperature for less than 2 hours, they should be refrigerated for later use or used before the 4-hour limit is up.
- If the cooked chickens have been held at room temperature for more than 2 hours but less than 4 hours, they should be used within the 4-hour limit but they cannot be returned to the refrigerator.
- If the cooked chickens have been held at room temperature for more than 4 hours, they should be discarded.



4°C - 60°C (e.g. room temperature) for	Refrigeration for later use	Immediate consumption
<2 hr	✓	✓
2-4 hr	✗	✓
>4 hr	✗	Discard

- Cooked chickens should be covered and stored at 4°C or below for prolonged display or storage.
- Remind customers to consume cooked chickens, especially chickens which have been held or display under ambient condition, as soon as possible.



≤4°C

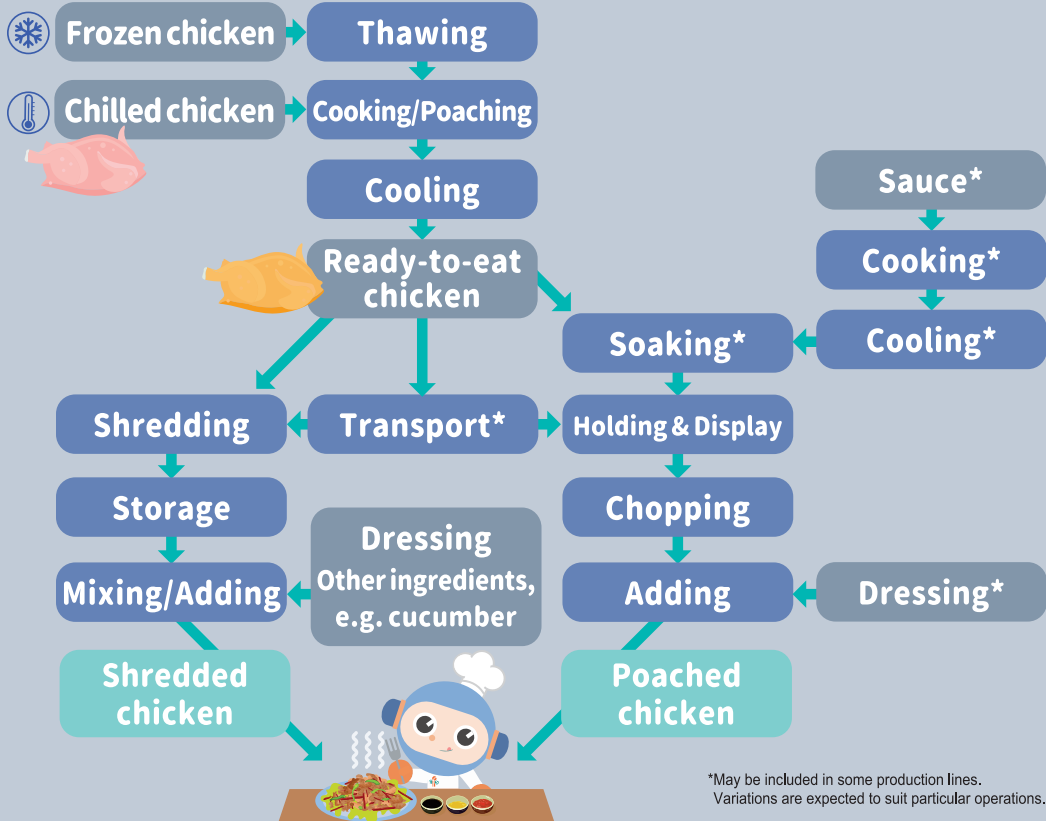
# General hygiene practices

- Use separate utensils to handle raw food and ready-to-eat food such as cooked chicken.
- Wash and sanitise cutting boards, knives and food contact surfaces thoroughly before and after chopping cooked chickens.
- Wash hands thoroughly with warm and soapy water for 20 seconds before and after handling food.
- Clean all areas for cooked chickens preparation, storage and display on a daily basis.



- Observe good personal hygiene. Refrain from smoking and eating during preparation of food. Open wounds should be covered.
- Suspend from engaging in any food handling work when suffering or suspected to be suffering from a communicable disease or symptoms of illness such as diarrhoea, vomiting, fever, sore throat and abdominal pain.
- Deploy different staff for handling cash and food.
- Avoid using mobile devices or touching other potentially contaminated objects (such as a cleaning cloth or cash) when handling food. After touching these objects, wash hands thoroughly before handling food again.
- Wear a face mask and hair net as appropriate, and wear clean working clothes.

# Key steps involved in generic poached chicken and shredded chicken production



Poached chicken and shredded chicken are examples of ready-to-eat food that can be eaten without further cooking. If not handled properly, they may be contaminated by foodborne pathogens and "superbugs". As there is no or insufficient heat treatment to kill the bacteria that may be present, a high level of personal, environmental and food hygiene is critical during poached chicken and shredded chicken production. Food handlers should follow the "Five Keys to Food Safety" to reduce the risk of both "superbugs" and foodborne diseases.



In addition to this guideline, food handlers should go through the CFS' **"Ready-to-eat Food: General Hygiene Advice for Food Businesses"**  
[https://www.cfs.gov.hk/english/multimedia/multimedia\\_pub/files/Full-RTE\\_Food-Eng\\_Pamphlet.pdf](https://www.cfs.gov.hk/english/multimedia/multimedia_pub/files/Full-RTE_Food-Eng_Pamphlet.pdf)  
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