



## The BOC quick guide to:

# Campylobacter

### What is campylobacter?

Campylobacter is the generic name for a range of bacteria that cause food poisoning, leading to more cases in the UK than salmonella, E.coli and listeria combined, according to the Food Standards Agency (FSA). They estimate up to 250,000 people could be affected by campylobacter poisoning this year, costing the UK economy about £900 million.

### How dangerous is it?

Symptoms include abdominal pain, severe diarrhoea and sometimes vomiting, which can last for up to 10 days. It can be particularly severe in the elderly and small children and it's calculated campylobacter may cause more than 100 deaths a year. In addition it can trigger longer-term conditions such as irritable bowel syndrome, reactive arthritis and, in rare cases, a serious nervous condition called Guillain-Barré syndrome.

### Where is it found?

About four in five cases of campylobacter poisoning in the UK come from contaminated poultry. Less than 10 years ago, the bacteria was present in potentially harmful quantities on the skin of 65% of the retailed fresh chicken that were tested. This led to an industry-wide

campaign to reduce contamination. Latest figures from the FSA show that on average, across the market, 6.5% of chickens tested positive for the highest level of contamination, down from 9.3% for the same period last year. Progress has been made, but all agree more needs to be done.

### How can cryogenic technology combat campylobacter contamination?

Working with the FSA, Campden BRI and the UK's leading turkey farmer Bernard Matthews, BOC has developed PREVENTUM® Rapid Surface Chilling technology as an important weapon in the fight against campylobacter bacteria. As the name suggests, the surface of the poultry is rapidly chilled using a cryogenic vapour applied in a tunnel which kills the bacteria on the skin but does not freeze the meat below.

### Is it effective?

Tests have shown PREVENTUM reduces campylobacter counts in processed chickens by an average of 90%. Also, it does not affect compliance with the current poultry Meat Marketing Regulations. Last but not least, it does not affect the taste, texture or appearance of poultry.