

FSA advises consumers that some chilled poultry products on sale will have been previously frozen and defrosted to maintain stock levels this Christmas?

The products should be clearly labelled as 'defrosted' and are suitable for home freezing if it says so on the label. Information will be available in-store and on retailers' websites.?

This temporary change will apply to some turkey, duck, capon and goose products on sale from 28 November to 31 December and does not apply to chicken. ?

Our advice, which applies only to England and Wales, comes after the [Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs \(Defra\)](#) and the [Welsh Government](#) announced a range of measures to help support the poultry industry with the current challenges presented by bird flu.?

Narriman Looch, Head of Foodborne Disease Control at the FSA said:

“Like other poultry, these defrosted products will be perfectly safe for you and your family to eat as long as you follow the instructions on the label and practice good food hygiene.?

This is different to our usual advice of not refreezing raw meat thawed at home as the food industry has specialist equipment to very quickly freeze, then defrost these products in controlled conditions. Home freezers are less efficient so defrosting and refreezing raw meat at home could allow the growth of harmful germs.” ?

Andrea Martinez-Inchausti, Deputy Director for Food at the BRC, said:

“Retailers are taking active steps to ensure that their customers are able to enjoy turkey during the festive season. By killing birds a bit earlier and freezing them,? these products can be defrosted and sold in the run up to Christmas without worries about the impact of avian flu on supply.”

Food hygiene advice for consumers handling all poultry, including chilled and previously frozen Christmas turkey, duck, capon and geese products:

- Wash your hands before and after handling raw poultry meat?
- Don't wash whole birds or poultry meat products?
- Check the use-by date?
- Follow the storage instructions on the label, and only freeze chilled poultry meat if the label says it is suitable for home freezing?
- If your bird is frozen, check the label, as some smaller birds can be cooked from frozen?

- You may need to allow extra time for defrost a large bird before cooking. Plan this in advance, as a whole turkey can take between 3 to 5 days to properly defrost.?
- Follow the cooking instructions, and make sure it's steaming hot throughout.?

Bird flu advice for consumers:?

Properly cooked poultry and poultry products including your Christmas turkey, duck, capon or goose, are safe to eat. Bird flu poses a very low food safety risk for UK consumers, and it does not change the FSA's advice on consumption of poultry products.?

For more tips on storing, defrosting, cooking your Christmas dinner and what to do with any leftovers visit food.gov.uk?