

## ***Arcobacter spp.* in raw meat can trigger food-borne infections in humans**

BfR Opinion No. 046/2007, 1 November 2007

Very little is known at the present time about the importance of the germ *Arcobacter spp.* It can cause food-borne infections in humans and has been detected to a growing degree in recent years in raw poultry meat and pork. For a long time the bacterium was classified as safe; only recently have more and more scientists turned their attention to this issue on the international level. The Federal Institute for Risk Assessment (BfR) has undertaken a risk assessment of food contaminated with *Arcobacter spp.* This pathogen plays a role particularly in the case of poultry meat. However, the available data are not robust because of the non-standardised test methods used. This means that further studies are needed on the formation and transmission pathways in order to be able to estimate the actual risk presented by this bacterium.

It is only since the 1990s that this bacterium, which was previously classified as a *Campylobacter*, has been assigned to the *Arcobacter spp.* strain. Some sub-groups cause gastrointestinal disorders with stomach cramps and diarrhoea in humans. In the literature various food-borne infections have been described that were caused by *Arcobacter spp.* Some authors attribute to the bacterium a pathogenic potential similar to that of *Campylobacter*.

Comparable studies in various countries have shown that fresh poultry is particularly susceptible to attack by this pathogenic microorganism. As, at the present time, it is not possible to definitively evaluate how harmful this bacterium is for humans, BfR advises consumers - along the lines of precautionary consumer protection - to comply with the rules of kitchen hygiene: cook meat through (at least 10 minutes at 70 °C) and thoroughly wash hands, knives, chopping boards, work surfaces in order to avoid the cross contamination of other food.

The full version of this BfR Opinion is available in German on [http://www.bfr.bund.de/cm/208/arcobacter\\_spp\\_in\\_rohem\\_fleisch\\_kann\\_beim\\_menschen\\_lebensmittelinfektionen\\_ausloesen.pdf](http://www.bfr.bund.de/cm/208/arcobacter_spp_in_rohem_fleisch_kann_beim_menschen_lebensmittelinfektionen_ausloesen.pdf)