



Chapter 12

Eat Clean Meat

There is no denying that meat is an important part of diet for many of us, and it helps meet our body's requirements for protein and other nutrients. But that said one needs to be super careful about its overload as too much of it can be bad. But while keeping a lid on the quantity is important what is even more imperative is to ensure consumption of safe meat.

How safe is that **chicken or egg** that you are eating?



Meat and eggs are high risk foods which get spoilt easily. This sector is highly unorganized. Issues like adulteration of meat, presence of veterinary drug residues etc. are rising concerns in this sector. Indiscrete use of antibiotics /hormones used for rearing of animal and birds - cannot be ignored.

This is happening because the rising demand for food and animal products is leading to over use of Hormones to extend lactation and growth promotion in farm animals to produce more meat for less money, resulting in fatter profits. And this is leading to serious consequences on human health.

So, **what's the harm?**

The science is solid on the fact that there's a big cost involved. Overuse of antibiotics in animal farms endangers us all as it multiplies drug resistance in the environment and can over time promote the development of hard-totreat, antibiotic-resistant superbugs that make people sick. So, we are slowly but steadily, thanks to our own follies, becoming an antibiotics resistant race.

Be **careful!**

Source your meat and eggs carefully from authentic source. Maintain food safety and good hygiene. Temperature plays a key role for miniating safe food zones, therefore storage and display cabinets at retail stores should be functioning when you pick meat. Miniating handlers must be trained to hygienically handle the routine operations. If cooked meat is sold, it should be properly cooked and stored at required temperature.

The Good Work!

FSSAI is doing a lot of work in this sector. It's initiative '**Clean and Safe Meat Shop**' aims to uplift safety and hygiene conditions in processing and sale of - Fresh meat/fish. It also aims to help consumers make informed decisions regarding the shops from where they buy meat products, and create a culture of competition amongst meat shops through a ratings mechanism.

FSSAI has set benchmarks on basic food safety and hygiene, which will enable identified meat shops to get recognized and rated. Meat shops are given hygiene rating after conducting gap audits by food safety department or FSSAI empaneled audit agencies. Prerequisite here is: Licensing and Registration under FSSA, 2006 and Training of food handlers under FoSTaC.



YOU CAN KEEP YOUR MEAT SAFE TOO

- ★ Avoid buying meat that has discolouration and don't buy from unhygienic places.
- ★ Always buy firm fish and check that the eyes are crystal-clear, plump, wet, and shiny (when the fish begins to deteriorate, the eyes dry out, become cloudy, and sink in or shrivel away), and the tail and dorsal fins of the fish should be healthy-looking, wet, and intact (older fish's fins will be dry and brittle).
- ★ When buying eggs check that the shell is not cracked, Filthy with excreta or mouldy/ rotten. Cracks can indicate the presence of bacteria, while a rotten appearance on the shell may indicate mould.
- ★ Read the use-by date/ best before date on the carton. Eggs can usually last up to 3 weeks if stored in the refrigerator. The use by date on the carton is usually a good indication of whether the eggs are still fresh.
- ★ Perform float test: Put egg in a bowl of water, if the egg sinks to the bottom, it's still fresh. If the egg sinks but stands upright on the bottom of the container, the egg is slightly stale. If the egg floats in water, it should be avoided as such eggs might be stale or rotten.
- ★ For processed and packaged meat or poultry products, always closely examine the labelling with respect to its ingredients, use by date or expiry date.
- ★ Store eggs separately in the egg tray of the refrigerator.
- ★ Store meat and poultry in the chiller if it is to be consumed within a day, or in the freezer if it needs to be stored longer.
- ★ Store raw meat and poultry in sealed, moisture proof plastic bags/ containers to avoid contamination or dripping into other foods.
- ★ Keep raw and cooked meat separately.
- ★ Store eggs away from foods with strong odors (such as fish, apples, cabbage or onions).
- ★ Frozen meat should be thawed in the refrigerator.
- ★ Cook to the right temperature. In general, meat should be cooked to achieve minimum core temperature of 75 °C or higher.