

Food alarm: Mutton, chicken & fish on your plate may be highly contaminated

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Representative image

HYDERABAD: In a cause for concern, a harmful bacterium that thrives in the human gut has emerged as the biggest bacterial contaminant in [mutton](#), chicken, beef and fish sold in Hyderabad markets.

Enterococcus faecalis has outsmarted Escherichia coli, another gut bacterium, by contaminating 44% raw meat and fish samples analysed as part of a research study.

Enterococcus faecalis (E faecalis) is known to cause ailments ranging from inflammation of the layers of the brain (meningitis) to blood poisoning (septicaemia). Bad handling by meat sellers in Hyderabad is the main reason for the contamination.

The study was carried by researchers from Osmania University's department of microbiology and college of technology, Amrita School of Biotechnology, Kerala, and SLS Cell Cure Technologies. It revealed that meat was more contaminated than eggs.

"We observed 44% Enterococcus faecalis, 40% Klebsiella oxytoca, 10% E coli and 4% Pseudomonas mirabilis," the researchers said in the study published in the latest issue of Proteomics & Bioinformatics.

It also revealed the presence of other harmful bacteria like Staphylococcus aureus, Staphylococcus epidermidis, Salmonella species, Bordetella, Klebsiella pneumoniae, Enterococcus aerogenes, Micrococcus species, Citrobacter species, Proteus species and Providencia species.

The researchers said while E faecalis was predominantly found in chicken and meat samples, E coli was found mostly in beef. E coli bacteria was present more in numbers than Salmonella species.

As part of the study, 100 meat samples were collected from shops from [Moula Ali](#), AS Rao Nagar, Malkajgiri and Tarnaka. Enterococcus faecalis was the most predominant organism found.