

Latest consumer survey tracks level of worry around the cost of food and its impact on food safety

Latest data from [September 2022](#) shows:

- 40% of participants reported feeling worried about being able to afford food in the next month
- 30% of participants reported that they had skipped a meal or cut down the size of their meals because they did not have enough money to buy food in the last month
- 32% of participants reported that they had eaten food past its use-by date, at least once in the past month, because they couldn't afford to buy more food
- 18% of participants turned off a fridge and/or freezer containing food, at least once in the last month, to reduce energy bills and save money

Along with publishing this evidence, the FSA is also reminding people how they can stay safe while making their food go further and saving money.

Emily Miles, FSA Chief Executive, said:

'We know many people are worried about food affordability right now and our evidence shows that people are finding ways to save money where they can. It's not a good idea to turn off the fridge or eat food past its use-by date as these things can lead to a higher risk of you becoming ill with food poisoning.'

'Your fridge is a useful appliance that not only keeps your food safe, but can help cut down what you end up throwing out. Keeping your fridge cold enough, 5°C or below, will prevent bacteria from multiplying on your food and make it last as long as it can. You should also keep food with a 'use by date' in the fridge and think about freezing it on or before the day of the date if you're not going to use it.'

'We've got lots more advice on our website to help people use their judgement and make informed choices, while staying safe.'

Steps consumers can take to make food go further:

- Keep your fridge on to help keep you well and make your food go further
- Using your fridge at the correct temperature (5 C or below) helps prevent food poisoning. If food isn't properly chilled it could go off faster and be unsafe to eat
- A use-by date on food is about safety. This is the most important date to remember. You can eat food until and on the use-by date but not after. You can also freeze food with a use-by date right up to the end of the date on the label
- [Best Before](#) is about quality. The food can be safe to eat after this date – but it might not be at its best.
- [Set your freezer](#) to -18°C. This temperature delays chemical reactions within foods and puts bacteria "on pause", allowing us to keep food longer
- Our [home fact checker](#) has more tips on how to help make food go further and stay safe

Consumer Insights Monthly Tracker

This data is part a series of statistics on consumer concerns relating to food in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. The consumer insights tracker monitors trends on consumer behaviour and attitudes on a monthly basis and is published [on our website](#).