

FSA consumer survey highlights risky kitchen behaviours

[The Wave 9 report](#), conducted between April and July last year, shows that more than three-quarters of respondents (76%) would rely on the 'sniff test' to assess whether raw meat is safe to eat or cook with. A further 73% of respondents said they would rely on the sniff test for milk and yoghurt, and 65% of respondents said they would do so with fish.

The report also found that many respondents would eat bagged salad (72%) or cheese (70%) after the use-by date, while around six-in-ten respondents would eat yoghurt (63%), milk (60%), or cooked meats (58%) after the use-by date.

[The FSA's advice](#), for foods with a use-by date, is that the 'sniff test' is not an appropriate method for testing whether the food is safe to eat or cook with. This is because food can look and smell fine even after the use-by date has passed, but the product will not be safe to eat and could cause food poisoning due to harmful bacteria which we cannot see or smell.

The survey also found that around 4-in-10 respondents said they wash raw fish or seafood (40%) or raw chicken (38%), at least occasionally, when preparing it. The FSA recommends that people [do not wash raw meat, fish or poultry](#), because doing this can splash harmful bacteria onto your hands, work surfaces, ready-to-eat foods, and cooking equipment.

Some of the more positive findings in the report show that 94% of respondents would never eat sausages when they are pink or have pink juices, and the majority of respondents (62%) reported that they always check use-by dates before they cook or prepare food. Most people (83%) also reported that they would only reheat leftover food once, [in line with FSA guidance](#).

"There are around 2.4 million recorded cases of foodborne illness in the UK every year, but by following the FSA's food hygiene advice on cooking, cleaning, chilling and cross-contamination, you can reduce the risk of you or your family becoming unwell.

Food and You 2 provides us, and the wider government, with important insights into what people think and do when it comes to food. We will continue to use this data in our work to protect public health and consumers' wider interests in relation to food."

FSA Chief Executive, Katie Pettifer.

Other notable findings in the report include:?

- Across England, Wales, and Northern Ireland, 21% of respondents were classified as food insecure, which means having limited or uncertain access to adequate food. This marks a slight improvement on the previous figures (Wave 8, October 2023 to January 2024) which showed that 24% of respondents were classified as food insecure.
- Most respondents reported confidence in food safety and authenticity, with 89% of respondents saying they were confident that the food they buy is safe to eat.

- Respondents were asked to report whether they had any concerns about the food they eat. Most respondents (79%) had no concerns. Amongst the remaining 21% of respondents, the most common concerns related to food production methods (35%) and nutrition and health (26%). All online respondents were asked if they had concerns about several food-related issues, from a list of options, and the most prevalent concern was food prices (69%).
- 75% of respondents reported that they had made a change to their eating habits for financial reasons in the previous 12 months. The most common changes were eating out less (43%), eating at home more (42%), eating fewer takeaways (38%) and buying items on special offer more (39%).

About the report:

Fieldwork for Food and You 2: Wave 9? was conducted between 24 April 2024 and 1 July 2024, and a total of 5,526 adults from 3,908 households across England, Wales, and Northern Ireland took part.

The Food and You 2 survey is an official statistic and measures self-reported knowledge, attitudes and behaviours related to food safety and other food topics.

The FSA's [Home Food Fact Checker](#) has tips for consumers on how to help make food go further and stay safe.

Read the research:??

The full Wave 9 report is available in [the research section of our website](#).