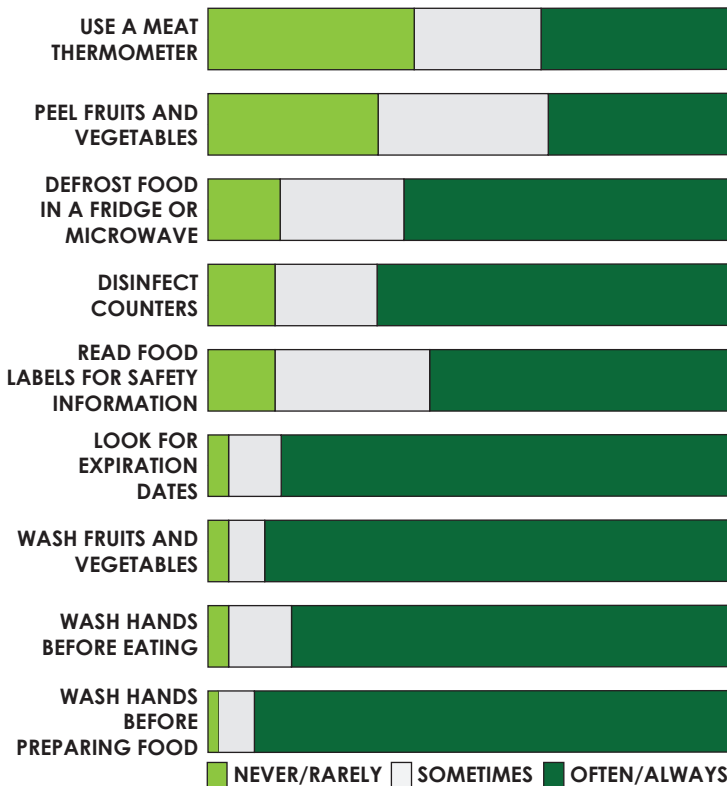# WHAT FLORIDIANS THINK THEY KNOW ABOUT
FOOD SAFETY

Not following proper food safety practices can be a recipe for disaster. Foodborne illness, sometimes called food poisoning, is a common — but largely preventable — public health problem. Outbreaks can occur when food is not properly cleaned, stored, cooked or chilled. More than 100,000 Americans are hospitalized each year with a food-related illness caused by bacteria, viruses, mold or parasites.

HOW OFTEN DO YOU...?

USE A MEAT THERMOMETER

PEEL FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

DEFROST FOOD IN A FRIDGE OR MICROWAVE

DISINFECT COUNTERS

READ FOOD LABELS FOR SAFETY INFORMATION

LOOK FOR EXPIRATION DATES

WASH FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

WASH HANDS BEFORE EATING

WASH HANDS BEFORE PREPARING FOOD

■ NEVER/RARELY □ SOMETIMES ■ OFTEN/ALWAYS

ALMOST SPOTLESS SAFETY HABITS IN HOME KITCHEN

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 1-in-6 Americans, about 48 million people, get sick from foodborne illnesses annually. But Floridians seem to do surprisingly well at taking steps to protect themselves from improperly handled, prepared or stored food.

In addition to often or always taking correct precautionary measures, Floridians correctly identified food safety threats such as defrosting meat on the counter, eating raw eggs and not washing the cutting boards when switching between raw meat and produce.

Just over half of Floridians said food safety risks are not impossible to avoid, while 73 percent believe they can avoid unsafe food by being careful.
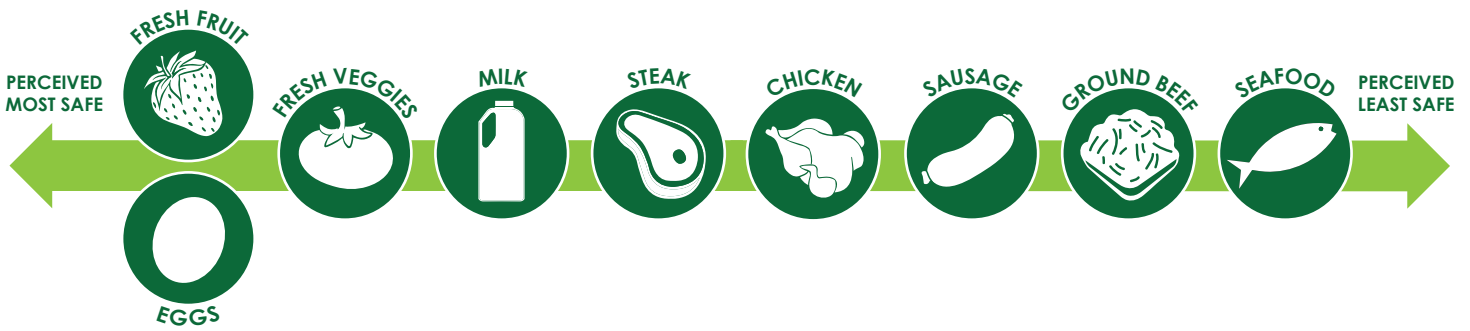
A significant portion of respondents, however, never or rarely uses a meat thermometer or peels edible skins off fresh fruits and vegetables. About 60 percent of Floridians mistakenly believe they should rinse meat under cold water before cooking — a practice that could lead to cross-contaminating other foods, utensils or surfaces.

ABOUT OUR SURVEYS

The PIE Center conducts at least four public opinion surveys every year that focus on issues of key significance to Floridians. The surveys explore what Floridians think about the rights, responsibilities, attitudes and behaviors associated with critical issues such as food production, water quantity and quality, immigration and labor, and endangered and invasive species.

✔ **95% KNOW TO REFRIGERATE FOOD WITHIN TWO HOURS.**

✔ **91% KNOW THAT FRUITS AND VEGETABLES CAN CAUSE FOOD POISONING.**

✔ **81% KNOW EGGS SHOULD BE COOKED UNTIL THEY ARE NOT WET OR RUNNY.**

✔ **91% KNOW EATING RAW EGGS IS UNHEALTHY.**

✔ **87% KNOW NOT TO DEFROST MEAT ON THE COUNTER.**

✘ **41% KNOW NOT TO RINSE MEAT BEFORE COOKING.**

✔ **91% KNOW GROUND MEAT SHOULD BE COOKED UNTIL THERE IS NO RED OR PINK IN THE CENTER.**

✔ **97% KNOW TO WASH CUTTING BOARDS BETWEEN USES FOR RAW MEAT AND PRODUCE.**

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PERCEIVED MOST SAFE

FRESH FRUIT

FRESH VEGGIES

MILK

STEAK

CHICKEN

SAUSAGE

GROUND BEEF

SEAFOOD

PERCEIVED LEAST SAFE

EGGS

SURVEY: FLORIDIANS FEAR THE WRONG FOODS

Only 19 percent of Floridians consider themselves extremely worried about bacteria in their food, even though the microorganisms cause the vast majority of foodborne illnesses.

Substances such as additives and preservatives ranked higher among those extreme concerns but have not been linked to illnesses. As Floridians' more moderate concerns are factored in, research shows residents hold about the same level of fear for the substances.

Floridians are also incorrect about which foods are the most or least safe. About three-quarters of residents believe fresh fruits and vegetables are safe, but produce contributes to almost half of all foodborne illnesses, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Only half of Floridians believe seafood is safe, while CDC data shows that seafood is only accountable for 6 percent of foodborne illnesses.

More than half of Floridians are not worried about food prepared in their kitchen, compared to 18 percent who are unconcerned about the safety of food when eating out. While CDC data indicates about half of outbreaks occur at restaurants or delis, most foodborne illnesses go undiagnosed or unreported.
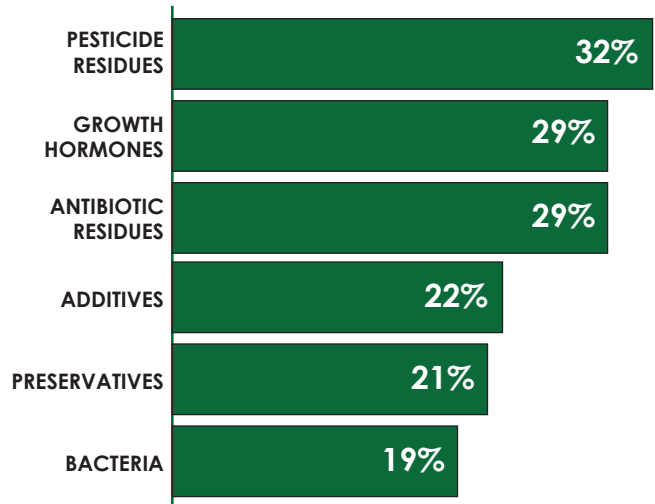
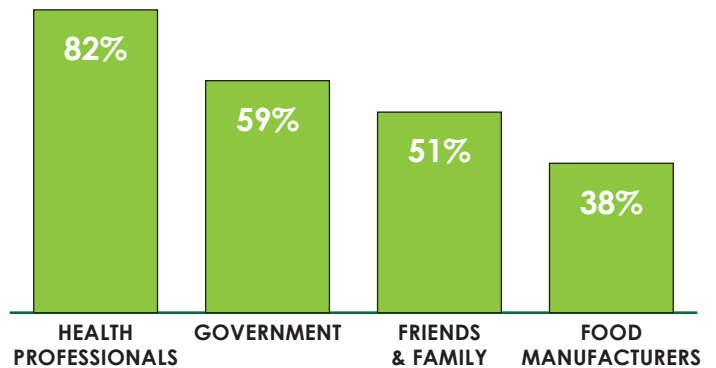**52% ARE NOT WORRIED ABOUT FOOD PREPARED IN THEIR KITCHEN.**
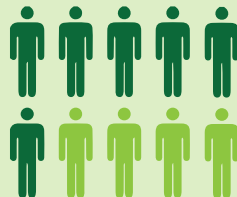
18% ARE NOT WORRIED ABOUT FOOD WHEN EATING OUT.

"I AM EXTREMELY WORRIED ABOUT THE SAFETY OF FOOD CONTAINING..."

PESTICIDE RESIDUES	32%
GROWTH HORMONES	29%
ANTIBIOTIC RESIDUES	29%
ADDITIVES	22%
PRESERVATIVES	21%
BACTERIA	19%

"I TRUST THESE SOURCES TO DELIVER ACCURATE INFORMATION ABOUT FOOD SAFETY..."

HEALTH PROFESSIONALS	GOVERNMENT	FRIENDS & FAMILY	FOOD MANUFACTURERS
82%	59%	51%	38%

"I AM RESPONSIBLE FOR MY OWN FOOD SAFETY."

AGREE	NEUTRAL	DISAGREE
75%	19%	6%
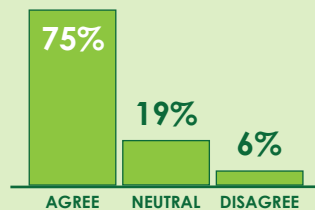
6-OF-10 PEOPLE SAY FOOD SAFETY CONCERNS ARE NOT EXAGGERATED.

"FOOD SAFETY IS A MAJOR CONCERN OF MINE."

AGREE	NEUTRAL	DISAGREE
47%	29%	24%

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