Food Safety Messages and Delivery Mechanisms for Transplant Recipients and Their Caregivers

Presented by
Katherine M. Kosa, MS, RTI International

Presented to
2006 Food Safety Education Conference:
Reaching At-Risk Audiences and Today’s Other Food Safety Challenges
Denver, CO • September 27–29, 2006
USDA, FSIS contracted with RTI to conduct qualitative research with transplant recipients and caregivers to
- collect information on participants’ concerns about foodborne illness, their general food safety knowledge, and their safe food handling practices,
- identify effective delivery mechanisms for disseminating food safety information to target audience, and
- pretest the food safety education booklet.
Study Design

- RTI conducted one focus group (n = 10).
- RTI conducted 22 telephone interviews.
- Participants completed questionnaires before focus group and interviews (n = 31).
Most participants are somewhat concerned about getting foodborne illness from food prepared at home.

Majority of participants are very concerned about getting foodborne illness from food eaten outside the home.
Many participants received food safety information from healthcare professionals, but
- information was limited to specific foods to avoid and proper hygiene practices, and
- some participants were not given a specific timeframe for care.

Most participants were not aware of foodborne pathogens.

Many participants were not aware of some high risk foods.

Some participants did not understand pasteurization.
Most participants follow recommended practices to keep hands and surfaces clean and to prevent cross-contamination.

Most participants do not use a food thermometer.

Most participants do not use a refrigerator thermometer.

Most participants do not safely store large amounts of leftovers.

Many participants do not safely store opened packages of deli meats.
### Consumption of High Risk Foods

Percentage of Participants Who Reported Eating or Serving High-Risk Foods After Receiving Transplant

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>High-Risk Food</th>
<th>Transplant Recipients (n = 18)</th>
<th>Caregivers (n = 13)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cold deli or luncheon meats</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soft cheese, such as Brie, feta, Camembert, blue, queso fresco</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dishes that contain raw or undercooked eggs (e.g., Caesar salad or homemade eggnog)</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raw, homemade cookie dough or cake batter</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refrigerated smoked seafood, such as salmon, trout, mackerel, cod</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refrigerated pâtés or meat spreads</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raw sprouts</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unpasteurized fruit or vegetable juice or cider</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steak tartar (raw ground or chopped beef) or other raw meat or poultry</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sushi, ceviche, or other raw fish</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raw, unpasteurized milk</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cold hot dogs</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Prediscussion Questionnaire (n = 31). Because a probability-based sample was not used, these results should not be generalized to the population of U.S. transplant recipients and their caregivers in any statistical sense.
Each participant learned at least one new fact after reading the booklet.
- Foodborne pathogens and foodborne illnesses
- Foods that pose a high risk for foodborne illness
- Ways to safely handle food at home
- Pasteurization

Many participants did or plan to make at least one change based on what they learned from reading the booklet.
- Separate raw meats from other foods
- Follow recommended storage times
- Avoid eating sprouts
Delivery Mechanisms

- Transplant coordinators
- Transplant organizations
- Other health organizations
- Government websites
- Outreach programs
- Support groups
Practices to Emphasize in Future Educational Materials

- Choose foods that have been pasteurized.
- Reheat luncheon meats.
- Use a food thermometer.
- Use a refrigerator thermometer.
- Safely store luncheon meats and leftovers.