Food Handling and Consumption – Population Estimates from the 1988-2006 FDA/FSIS Food Safety Survey and 2006 Demographic Analysis

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Introduction

The Food Safety Survey (FSS) is a random digit-dial telephone survey of a nationally representative sample of American consumers conducted by the Food and Drug Administration. Data were collected in 1988, 1993, 1998, 2001, and 2006 with sample sizes ranging from 1628 to 4559.

The FSS contains information that FDA and FSIS use for risk assessments, regulatory, and policy matters, and consumer education purposes.

The FSS is used to assess food safety goals the Healthy People 2010.

Information is collected each year on the following topics:

- Food handling behaviors
- Potentially risky food consumption
- Food safety knowledge
- Risk perceptions of getting a foodborne illness
- Experience with foodborne illnesses and allergies
- Demographic variables

Survey Participation

- U.S. adults (Age 18 and up)
- Data are weighted to the Census population to allow for national estimates.

2006 Demographic Analysis

Table 2: Logistic Regression Models of the Relative Likelihood of NOT Wash Hands or Cutting Board

Table 5: Logistic Regression Models of the Relative Likelihood of Eating the Following Potentially Risky Foods

Results Presented

- U.S. Population Estimates

CLEAN AND SEPARATE:


1993 – 2001: Significant improvement on all of the measures of cross contamination.

2003 – 2006: Small improvements on washing hands before cooking and washing cutting board after cutting raw meat. No changes in other behaviors.

COOK – Food Thermometer Use

The percent of the U.S. population who cooks the main meal and reports owning a food thermometer has increased.

- 1996: 4%
- 2001: 4%
- 2006: 5%

COOL – 2006 Refrigerator Thermometer Use

- 51% report having either a food thermometer in the refrigerator or in a food storage container.
- Of those who have a refrigerator thermometer: 43% reported correct temperature.

Eating Potentially Risky Foods: Percent of U.S. Population Who Ate Each Food


Conclusions

- Improvement in many food safety behaviors between 1993 and 1998.
- Most of these improvements have been maintained from 1998, 2001, and 2006.
- Continued improvement on food thermometer usage for steak and chicken parts from 1998 through 2006.
- Males and those with higher levels of education are more likely to practice unsafe food handling behaviors and more likely to eat potentially risky foods.