

turning knowledge into practice

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

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Purpose

- 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).

Food Safety Concerns

- 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.



Food Safety Knowledge

- 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.

Safe Food Handling Practices

- 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

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

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.

Impact of Booklet

- 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.