

Food Safety Risks for Older Adults: Insights and Opportunities

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- Introduction
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- Nutrition Trends with Food Safety Implications
- Food Safety Risks in Older Adults
- Call to Action
- Resources to Remember
- References

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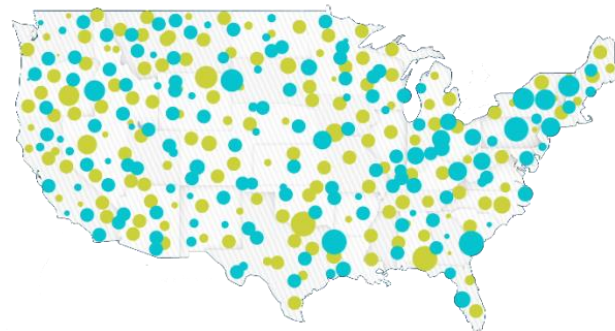
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A national leadership organization supporting the 5,000+ local, community-based Meals on Wheels programs across the country through advocacy, education, research and national partnerships and campaigns.



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- Foodborne illnesses are a preventable and underreported public health problem.
- High burden on public health system and contribute significantly to the cost of health care.
- Large groups of the population are vulnerable to foodborne illness.

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with Food Safety Implications

- Demographics
 - Density and Diversity (ethnicity, age, preferences)
- Globalization
 - Food supply
- Consumer Lifestyles and Expectations
 - Prevention, out of season eating, convenience, ubiquity
- Morbidity and Healthcare Expenditure
 - 48 million Americans (~17% of population)

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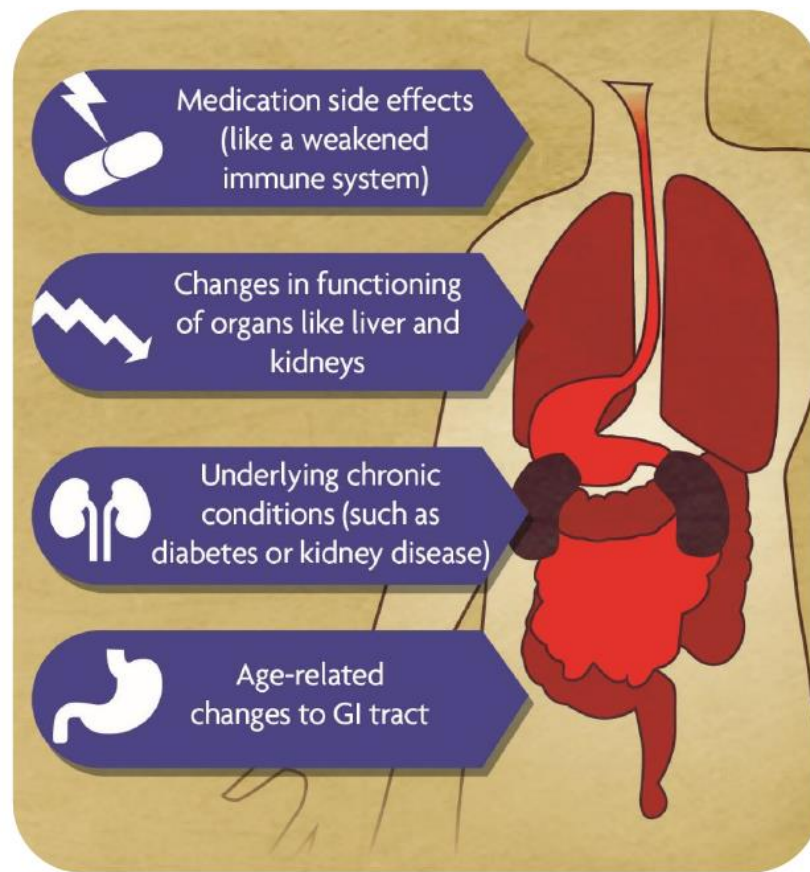


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Food Safety Risk Factors

- Adults 65+ are at an increased risk of hospitalization and death from foodborne illness.
- There are several reasons for this:
 - Physiological
 - Medical
 - Behavioral
 - Physical

- Age-related changes to our olfactory, gustatory and digestive systems.



Ghering, A. Food safety in older adults. United States Department on Agriculture – Food Safety Information Service, 2017.

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Risk Factors: Medical

- Older adults are more likely to have underlying chronic conditions, be a transplant recipient, and are also more likely to regularly take medications.
- Together, chronic conditions and some medications can further weaken the immune system.

Institute of Medicine (US) Food Forum. Providing Healthy and Safe Foods As We Age: Workshop Summary. Washington (DC): National Academies Press (US); 2010.

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Risk Factors: Medical

- Increased susceptibility to illness leading to increased hospital stays.
- Hospitalization exposes older adults to foodborne illness risks.
 - Increased risk of opportunistic infection;
 - Immobility due to extended hospital stays can also impair immune function.

Institute of Medicine (US) Food Forum. Providing Healthy and Safe Foods As We Age: Workshop Summary. Washington (DC): National Academies Press (US); 2010.

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Risk Factors: Behavioral

- Education should target behaviors most associated with increased likelihood of foodborne illness (FBD).
- Seniors are at increased risk of FBD because some:
 - Lifecourse experiences and learned behaviors
 - Perceptions of risk and food waste
 - Food label knowledge and usages

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Risk Factors: Physical

- Focus: home-bound seniors
- Dependent on foods brought to the home by:
 - Home delivered meal programs,
 - Food delivery services
 - Family members
 - Own food supplies
- Food behaviors, availability of foods, in-home food preparation and storage facilities

Anderson AL, Netterville LL, Sahyoun NR. "Food safety on the go": a course for home-delivered meal programs. Journal of Nutrition Education and Behavior, 2014;46(2):148-50.

- Effective interventions need to:
 - Tailor training to the learning needs of the older adults;
 - Stimulate risk perception related to food safety;
 - Develop skills on how to best adhere to recommended food safety practices;
 - Increase individual confidence in their capacity to develop better food safety practices;
 - Share resources from preferred sources.

Blackburn M, Bruhn C, Miller L, Ganthavorn C, Ober B. 2014. Seniors, and their food handlers and caregivers, need food safety and nutrition education. *California Agriculture*, 68(1):30-37. <https://doi.org/10.3733/ca.v068n01p30>.

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Foods to Avoid for Older Adults

2019 CONFERENCE



Hot dogs, deli meat, and
lunch meat (unless reheated
to steaming hot)



Raw or undercooked meat,
poultry, eggs and seafood.



Unpasteurized refrigerated
pâtés or meat spreads



Soft cheese (unless labeled
“made with pasteurized milk”)



Unwashed fruits and vegetables



Raw sprouts (i.e., alfalfa,
clover, and radish)



Raw or unpasteurized milk

*Ghering, A. Food safety in older adults. United States Department on
Agriculture – Food Safety Information Service, 2017.*

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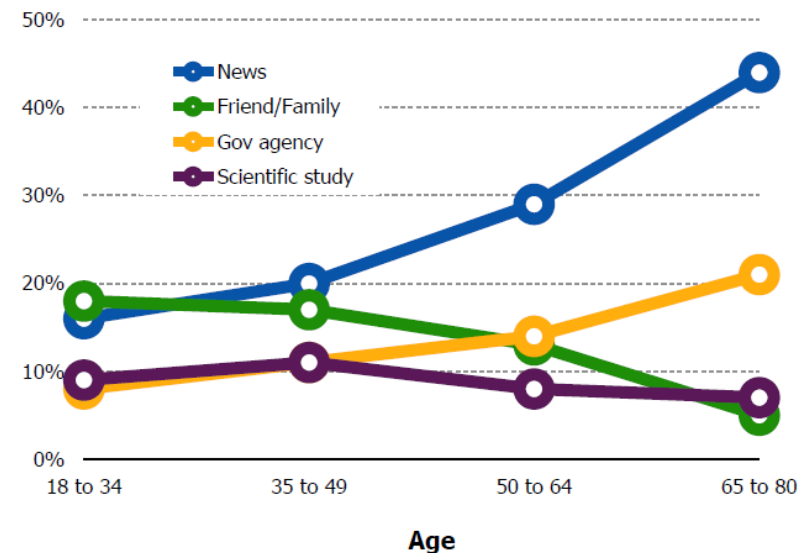
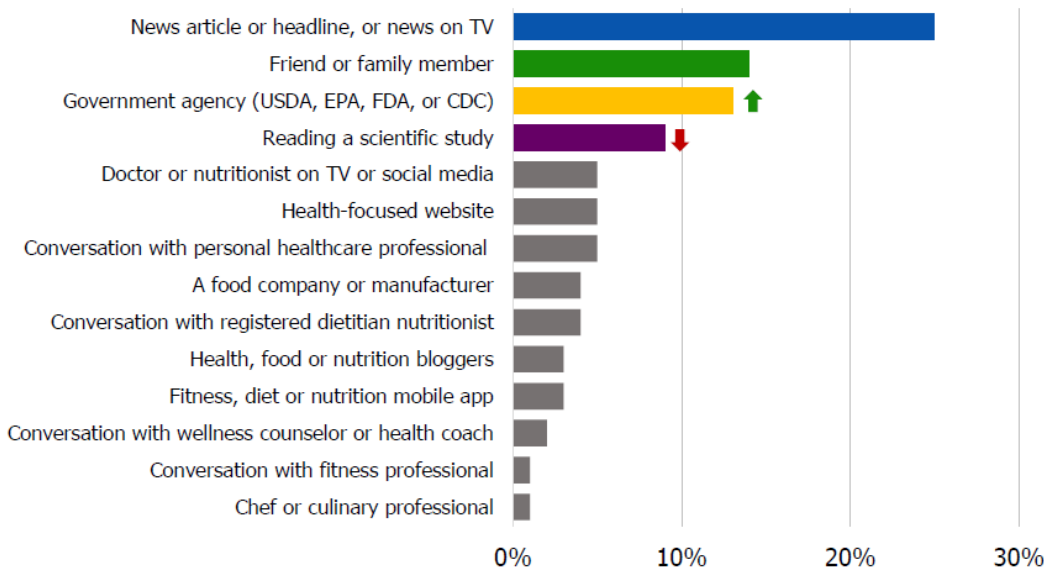


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News Sources Impact Opinion on Food Safety

Generations influenced by different sources, with younger adults more influenced by family, doctors on tv or food companies

Top Source of Influence on Opinion about Top Safety Concern



Q52: What one source of information most influenced your opinion on [TOP FOOD SAFETY ISSUE]? (n=1,009)

2018 International Food Information Council Foundation Survey

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Resources to Remember

- **Federal Government**
 - CDC, FDA, USDA-FSIS, SNAP-ED
- **Academic Institutions**
 - Cooperative Extension Services
- **Online Resource Centers**
 - National Resource Center on Nutrition and Aging
 - National Council on Aging – Center for Healthy Aging
- **Available Curricula**
 - Food Safety on the Go – MOWA/Univ. MD (*Relaunch: September 2019*)
 - Cooking Healthy, Eating Smart – Clemson University



Baby Boomers AND FOOD SAFETY

About 1 in 4 Americans will get food poisoning each year. Older adults are at an increased risk of serious complications from foodborne illness. A few simple steps can help keep the golden years pleasant for you or older adults you help care for.

What May Make You Sick?

Here's a look at some of the most common food pathogens that affect older adults and where they're found:

- E. COLI O157:H7**
 - Undercooked ground beef
 - unpasteurized milk and juices
 - contaminated raw fruits and vegetables, and water
 - Person-to-person contact
- CAMPYLOBACTER**
 - Unpasteurized (raw) milk
 - Raw or undercooked meat, poultry or seafood
 - Untreated or contaminated water
- SALMONELLA**
 - Raw or undercooked eggs, poultry or meat
 - Unpasteurized (raw) milk or juice
 - Cheese and seafood
 - Fresh fruits and vegetables

Why Are You at Risk?

Older adults are at elevated risk for hospitalization and death from foodborne infections. Why?

- Weakened side effects (like a weakened immune system)
- Changes in function of organs like liver and kidneys
- Underlying chronic conditions (such as diabetes or kidney disease)
- Age-related changes to treat

Product Dating

Dates printed on food labels indicate when items will no longer be at peak quality. Dates are not for safety. Here's what each one means:

- "SELL BY" DATE:** Buy the product before this date. It is safe to eat after this date.
- USE BY DATE:** This is the last date recommended for best flavor or quality.

To learn more visit www.fda.gov and search "product dating"

When in doubt, throw it out!

Perishable food that has been held at unsafe temperatures can cause illness, regardless of the package date.

Foods to Avoid

- SOFT CHEESES made from unpasteurized milk (Feta, Brie, Camembert, Blue-veined and queso fresco)
- RAW OR UNDERCOOKED MEAT, POULTRY, EGGS OR SEAFOOD
- UNWASHED FRESH VEGETABLES
- UNPASTEURIZED (raw) MILK
- HOT DOGS, DELI MEATS that have not been heated to steaming hot
- RAW SPROUTS
- PATES – unpasteurized/refrigerated patés

Safety Tips

The pathogens that cause foodborne illness can't be smelled or tasted. Proper food handling of the food you bring home is your best defense against food poisoning. With all foods, follow these tips:

- CLEAN:** Clean surfaces, utensils and hands with soap and warm water.
- SEPARATE:** Separate raw meat, poultry and seafood from ready-to-eat foods in your grocery-shopping cart, refrigerator, and during meal prep.
- COOK:** Cooked food is safe only after it's been heated to a high enough temperature to kill harmful bacteria. Use a food thermometer.
- CHILL:** Chill raw and prepared foods promptly if not consuming after cooking.

USDA | Ad Council | www.foodsafety.gov | ADDITIONAL SOURCE: <http://www.cdc.gov/foodsafety/>

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