

THE MISSING INGREDIENT

FOOD SAFETY MESSAGES ON RECIPE BLOGS

5 million
monthly visitors to #1 recipe blog

32.4
percent of recipes where colour = done
(n=139, N=429)

9.1
percent correct temp for beef, veal or lamb
(n=1, N=11)

784
recipes reviewed




1
recipe suggested washing hands
(n=1, N=784)






93.8
percent correct temp for whole poultry
(n=15, N=16)

BACKGROUND

- Social influences are important factors for consumer food handling (1)
- Recipe bloggers are social media influencers, drawing as many as 5 million visitors a month (2)
- Previous studies show that television chefs are poor models of safe food handling (3) and cookbook recipes lack food safety messages (4)
- Prompts in recipes can improve consumer food handling (5)
- The purpose of this study was to determine whether food safety messages on recipe blogs align with government recommendations

FINDINGS

- Adequate Cooking:**
- 16.9%** Suggested using a thermometer to check for doneness (n=81, N=479)
 - 60.8%** Provided a correct endpoint temperature, where one was given (n=48, N=79)
 - 78.1%** Provided a subjective indicator, such as time, touch, or colour, as the **only** measure of doneness (n=374, N=479)
-  Professional chefs were **no more likely** than amateurs to suggest thermometer use (p=.565)
 -  Thermometer use was suggested for **some types of food** more than others (p<.001)
 -  Bloggers were more likely to suggest using a thermometer for **whole poultry** than for any other food type (p<.001)

- Cross-Contamination Reduction:**
-  .1% suggested washing hands before preparing food (n=1, N=784)
 -  .2% suggested washing hands after handling raw meat (n=1, N=479)
 -  .1% suggested sanitizing surfaces and utensils (n=1, N=784)
- Fresh Produce:**
-  3.3% suggested washing fruits and vegetables to be consumed raw (n=10, N=304)
- Leftover Storage:**
-  55% provided a correct storage time, where one was given (n=17, N=31)

METHODS

- Reviewed the 50 most popular recipe blogs, based on web traffic and page views (2)
- Evaluated 784 recipes using structured, pre-tested coding form
- Recipes assessed for alignment with Canadian and U.S. government food safety guidelines (6,7)

Food Safety Messages Evaluated:

- Adequate cooking
- Cross-contamination reduction practices
- Washing fresh produce
- Storage time for leftovers

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Recipe bloggers can spread food safety messages to large audiences
- Bloggers rarely recommend safe food handling practices
- Educators should engage bloggers to promote food safety on recipe blogs

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