

Food Safety Facts at Your Fingertips

The meat and dairy industries say our food is safer today than it's ever been. The facts, however, tell a different story. Take a look and decide for yourself: Just how safe ARE meat and dairy products?

E. coli 0157:H7: What We Know

E. coli 0157:H7, also known as “the hamburger disease,” burst onto the scene in the 1990s, and is most commonly associated in the public mind with the infamous Jack-in-the-Box poisonings. Was that an anomaly? You decide:

Primary source of E. coli 0157:H7 infection: Hamburgers and other forms of ground beef.

Number of people daily in the U.S. who get sick from E. coli 0157:H7 infection, according to the Center for Disease Control: 200

Percentage of U.S. cattle carcasses infected with E. coli 0157:H7 bacteria, according to the USDA Food Safety and Inspection Service: Approximately 50%

Percentage of U.S. beef ground into patties containing traces of deadly E. coli: 89%

Potential consequences of ingestion of E. coli 0157:H7 bacteria in humans: Devastating illness with multiple organ failure and high death rate.

Long-term afflictions suffered by many survivors of E. coli 0157:H7 poisoning: epilepsy, blindness, lung damage, kidney failure.

Camphylobacter: What We Know

If there were a contest for the most frequently contaminated food product in the U.S. today, chicken would stand an excellent chance of winning. The culprit? Camphylobacter, which causes bloody diarrhea, fever, body ache, and abdominal pain. Camphylobacter has also been linked to the life-threatening paralytic condition Guillain-Barre Syndrome.

Leading cause of food-borne illness in the U.S.: Camphylobacter.

Number of people daily in the U.S. who become ill with Camphylobacter poisoning: More than 5,000.

Annual Camphylobacter-related fatalities in the U.S.: More than 750.

Primary source of Camphylobacter bacteria: Contaminated chicken flesh.

American chickens sufficiently contaminated with Camphylobacter to cause illness: 70%

American turkeys sufficiently contaminated with Camphylobacter to cause illness: 90%

Number of hens in three commercial flocks screened for Camphylobacter by University of Wisconsin researchers: 2,300. Number NOT infected with Camphylobacter: 8

Salmonella: What We Know

Symptoms of Salmonella poisoning include abdominal cramps, fever, headache, nausea, vomiting and diarrhea. Attacks are most serious for infants, pregnant women, older people and people who are already sick or who have immune system disorders.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, outbreaks of Salmonella in the U.S. have been linked to almost every food of animal origin, including poultry, beef, pork, eggs, milk and milk products.

Number of American chickens contaminated by Salmonella: 20%-80%.

Percentage of chickens purchased by 60 Minutes for its 1987 food safety expose that were contaminated with Salmonella: 50%

Americans sickened from eating Salmonella-tainted eggs every year: More than 650,000

Americans killed from eating Salmonella-tainted eggs every year: 600

Increase in Salmonella poisoning from raw or undercooked eggs between 1976 and 1986: 600%

“Eggs remain at the top of the list of foods that are causing food-borne outbreaks” – Center for Science in the Public Interest.

The Safest Food Supply in the World?

The U.S. meat and dairy industries say repeatedly that “we have the safest meat and poultry supply in the world. Is that a fact? You decide:

Leading cause of kidney failure in U.S. and Canadian children: Hemolytic Uremic Syndrome

Cases of Hemolytic Uremic Syndrome caused by E. coli 0157:H7 poisoning: 85%

Annual Hemolytic Uremic Syndrome cases in The Netherlands: 25.

Annual Hemolytic Uremic Syndrome cases in the U.S.: 7,500

Annual Salmonella cases in Sweden: 1 for every 10,000 people

Annual Salmonella cases in the U.S.: 1 for every 200 people.

Chickens infected with Campylobacter in Norway: 10%

Chickens infected with Campylobacter in the U.S.: 70%

So, are American meat and dairy products safe to eat? It's your life...you decide.

All facts and figures in this brochure are drawn from The Food Revolution by John Robbins, 2001 by Conari Press, Berkeley, CA. Copies of this book, as well as citations for the facts presented in this brochure, may be obtained by contacting EarthSave International, 1-800-362-3648.

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EarthSave's greatly needed programs are actively helping people reclaim their health and restore our planet. By joining EarthSave, you learn how your food choices protect and improve your quality of life, and you become an active player in healing the environment. For membership or information, call 1-800-362-3648.

EarthSave promotes food choices that are healthy for people and for the planet. We educate, inspire and empower people to shift toward a plant-based diet, and to take compassionate action for all life on Earth.

Local EarthSave chapters throughout the world help further these goals by teaching people in their communities about healthy, compassionate and sustainable food choices. For information on the chapter nearest you, or for information on starting a chapter, call us at 1-800-362-3648 or email us at information@earthsave.org.

How Safe IS Our Food Supply? You Decide.

A companion to EarthSave's educational series brochure on food-borne diseases, “Unsafe on Any Plate.”

Protect yourself from food-borne diseases.

Plant foods supply the nutrients necessary to promote good health



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