

2025 Consumer Insights Tracker

Food safety knowledge, behaviours and concerns

May 2026

Acknowledgement of country

Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ) acknowledges the Traditional Owners and Custodians of Country throughout Australia and their continuing connection to land, sea and community. We pay our respects to the people, the cultures and the elders past and present. FSANZ also acknowledges and respects ngā iwi Māori as the tangata whenua of Aotearoa, New Zealand.

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Introduction

The Consumer Insights Tracker (CIT) is an annual online survey of approximately 1,200 Australian and 800 New Zealand consumers aged 18+ years based on a nationally representative sample by the interlocked quotas of age, gender and location. The survey has proportionate representation of different levels of educational attainment, and Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples in Australia and Māori in New Zealand.

This report presents the results pertaining to consumers' knowledge and behaviours relating to food safety. Some questions in this module are changed and/or rotated annually, and build on those from previous CIT surveys, enabling an understanding of a greater number of food safety behaviours. Full details on the methodology and sample can be found in the module '*Methods, sample and survey instrument*'.

This document reports 2025 results unless otherwise specified. Due to rounding, figures may not add up to 100%. Statistically significant changes between the multi-year trend and the 2025 results, or by country in 2025 (Australia compared to New Zealand), are indicated where appropriate. Significance throughout this report refers to statistical significance at the .05 level unless otherwise noted.

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Key Results

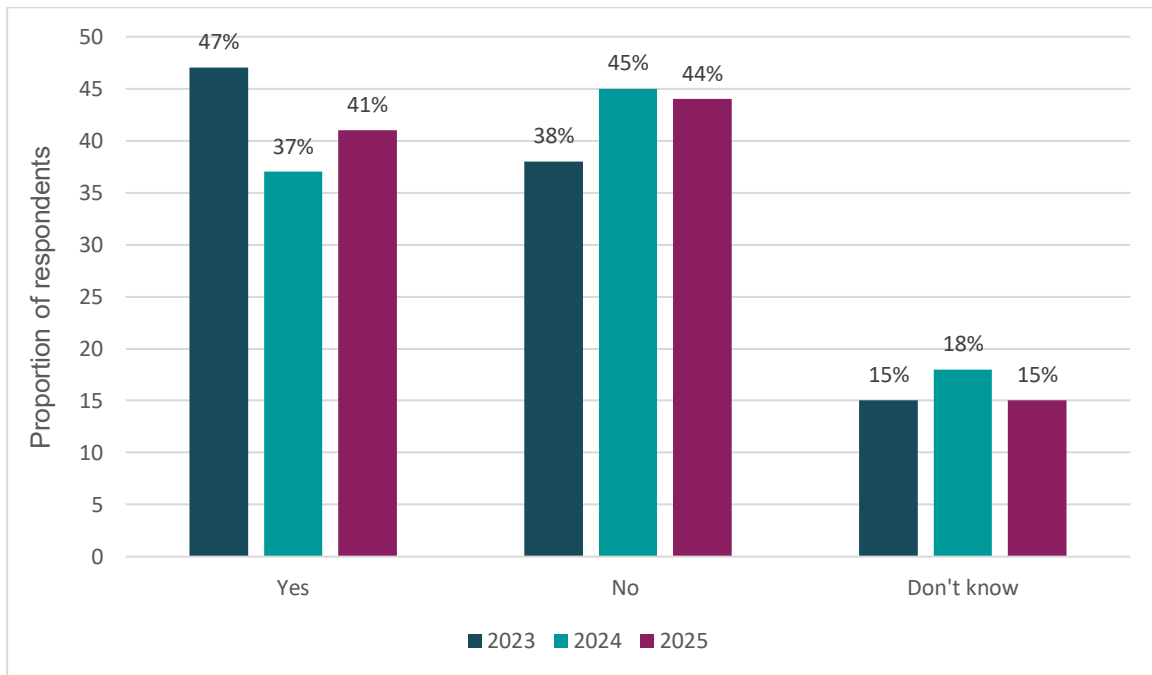
- Forty-one percent of respondents remembered a food recall happening over the last 12 months. This was significantly higher than the 37.3% recorded in 2024 but lower than the 46.6% reported in 2023.
- Food poisoning (such as from *Salmonella*) was most frequently ranked as the most important food safety issue, cited by 25.9% of respondents, followed by chemicals from the environment in food (13.5%).
- Raw chicken or other poultry (81.0%) and raw seafood and shellfish (76.3%) were the foods most commonly perceived as high risk if not stored, prepared, and/or cooked correctly at home.
- Most respondents reported consistently practicing key food safety behaviours related to preparing raw meat, with around 6 in 10 always washing hands and cleaning preparation surfaces after handling raw meat. In contrast, using a food thermometer to check chicken is cooked was uncommon: only 8% reported always doing this, while 43.8% reported never doing so.

Results

Food recall knowledge

Forty-one percent of respondents remembered a food recall happening over the last 12 months. This was significantly higher than the 37.3% of respondents who remembered a recall in 2024 but lower than the 46.6% in 2023 (Figure 1). A smaller proportion of Australians (38.6%) remembered a food recall happening over the last twelve months in comparison to New Zealanders (43.9%) (Table 1).

Figure 1: Knowledge of food recalls by year, 2023 - 2025



Q: Do you remember hearing about any food being recalled in the past 12 months?

Table 1: Knowledge of food recalls by country

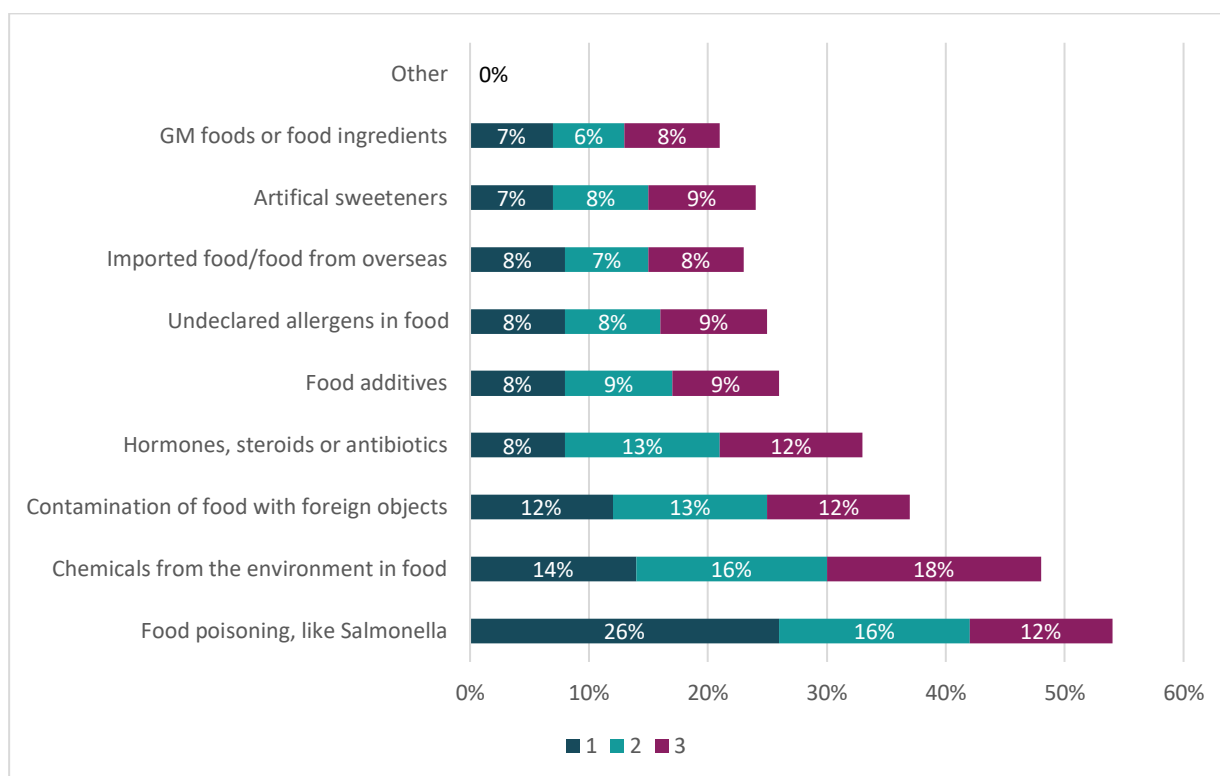
	Australia	New Zealand	Total
	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)
No	597 (45.7)	388 (41.9)	985 (44.1)
Yes	505 (38.6)	406 (43.9)	911 (40.8)
Can't say/don't know	205 (15.7)	131 (14.2)	336 (15.1)

Q: Do you remember hearing about any food being recalled in the past 12 months?

Food safety concerns

Respondents rated 'food poisoning, like *Salmonella*' and 'chemicals from the environment in food' as the most important food safety issues (Figure 2). Food poisoning was ranked the number one issue by 25.9% of respondents, with 16.3% and 11.7% respondents ranking it second and third respectively (Table 2). Chemicals from the environment was ranked as the most important food safety issue by 13.5% of respondents, with 16.1% ranking it second and 17.7% third. Genetically modified (GM) foods or food ingredients and artificial sweeteners were considered the least important issues, ranked first by 7.4% and 6.5% of respondents respectively.

Figure 2: Top three ranked food safety issues



Q: In your opinion, what are the top three most important FOOD SAFETY issues today? Please rank up to three food safety issues. 1 = Most important food safety issue, 2 = Second-most important, 3 = Third-most important

Table 2: Top three ranked food safety issues

	1 – Most important	2 – Second most important	3 – Third most important
	<i>n</i> (%)	<i>n</i> (%)	<i>n</i> (%)
Food poisoning	577 (25.9)	363 (16.3)	262 (11.7)
Undeclared allergens in food	184 (8.2)	173 (7.8)	203 (9.1)
Chemicals from the environment in food	301 (13.5)	359 (34.0)	395 (17.7)
Hormones, steroids and/or antibiotics in farm animal products	172 (7.7)	279 (12.5)	273 (12.2)
Artificial sweeteners	146 (6.5)	178 (8.0)	190 (8.5)
Food additives	181 (8.1)	210 (9.4)	189 (8.5)
Genetically modified foods	165 (7.4)	140 (6.3)	167 (7.5)
Imported food/food from overseas	175 (7.8)	160 (7.2)	169 (7.6)
Contamination of food with foreign objects	277 (12.4)	292 (13.1)	260 (11.6)
None of the above		51 (2.3)	
Other		12 (0.5)	

Q: In your opinion, what are the top three most important FOOD SAFETY issues today? Please rank up to three food safety issues. 1 = Most important food safety issue, 2 = Second most important, 3 = Third most important

There was no significant difference between the top three ranked food safety issues between 2023, 2024 and 2025 (Table 3).

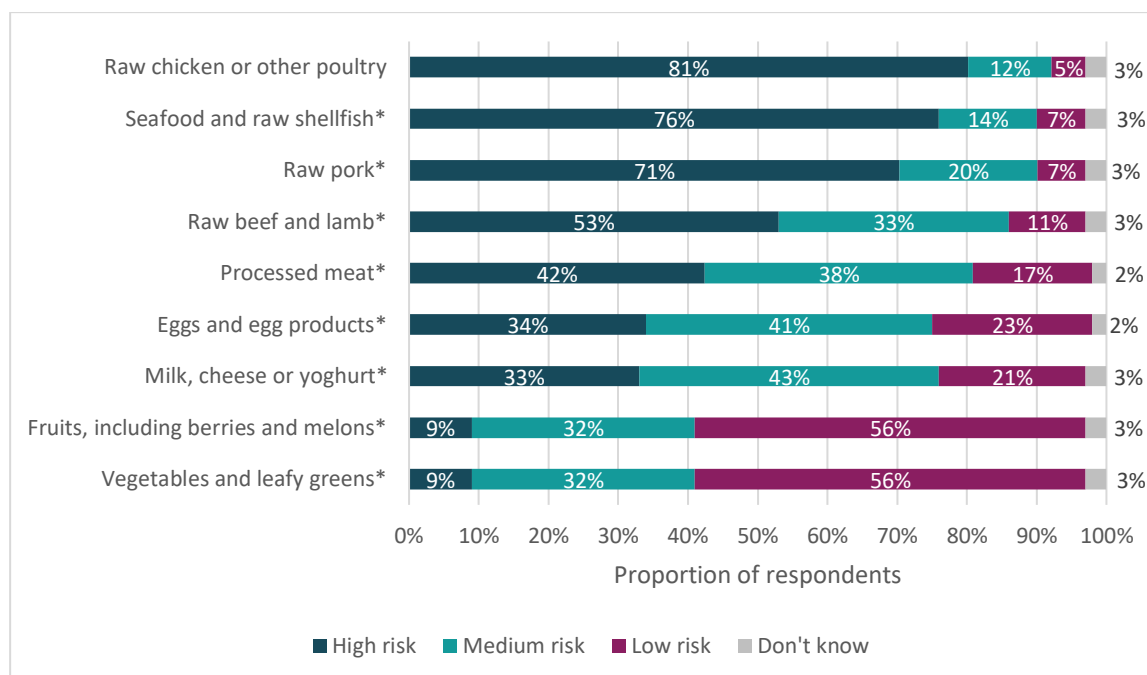
Table 3: Top three ranked food safety issues by year, 2023 - 2025

	1 - Most important (%)	2 - Second most important (%)	3 - Third most important (%)
2023	Food Poisoning like <i>Salmonella</i> (30.6%)	Chemicals from the environment (14.8%)	Contamination of food with foreign objects (10.9%)
2024	Food Poisoning like <i>Salmonella</i> (26.5%)	Chemicals from the environment (14.7%)	Contamination of food with foreign objects (11.8%)
2025	Food Poisoning like <i>Salmonella</i> (25.9%)	Chemicals from the environment (13.5%)	Contamination of food with foreign objects (12.4%)

Food risk perceptions

Raw chicken or poultry and raw seafood/shellfish were perceived as the riskiest foods to eat if not stored, prepared, and/or cooked correctly at home (Figure 3). Around 81.0% of respondents rated raw chicken or poultry as high risk (11.9% medium, 4.8% low), compared to 76.3% for raw seafood or shellfish (14.2% medium, 6.9% low). Vegetables and leafy greens (9.0% of respondents rated these as high risk) and fruits including berries and melons (9.2%) were perceived as the least risky foods.

Figure 3: Foods ranked according to their perceived risk



Q: In your opinion, how risky are the following foods to eat if not stored, prepared, and/or cooked correctly at home? [Response options: High risk, medium risk, low risk, don't know].

*Were perceived as higher risk in 2025 compared to 2024

All food categories, except raw chicken or other poultry, were perceived as higher risk in 2025 than in 2024 (Table 4). Due to a wording change in this question after the 2023 survey, a direct comparison of the 2023 results with 2024/2025 is not possible.

Table 4: Foods ranked according to their perceived risk by year, 2024 - 2025

	2024			2025		
	High risk <i>n</i> (%)	Medium risk <i>n</i> (%)	Low risk <i>n</i> (%)	High risk <i>n</i> (%)	Medium risk <i>n</i> (%)	Low risk <i>n</i> (%)
Raw chicken or other poultry	1,680 (79.4)	267 (12.6)	122 (5.8)	1,807 (81.0)	266 (11.9)	107 (4.8)
Raw seafood and shellfish	1,548 (73.2)	353 (16.7)	142 (6.7)	1,703 (76.3)	316 (14.2)	154 (6.9)
Raw pork	1,425 (67.4)	484 (22.9)	138 (6.5)	1,585 (71.0)	436 (19.5)	149 (6.7)
Raw beef and lamb	1,017 (48.1)	729 (34.5)	307 (14.5)	1,189 (53.3)	736 (33.0)	252 (11.3)
Processed meat, such as ham, salami, or sausages	792 (37.5)	836 (39.5)	423 (20.0)	938 (42.0)	851 (38.1)	389 (17.4)
Eggs and egg products	561 (26.5)	911 (43.1)	584 (27.6)	752 (33.7)	923 (41.4)	503 (22.5)
Milk, cheese, or yoghurt	618 (29.2)	872 (41.2)	576 (27.2)	734 (32.9)	967 (43.3)	472 (21.1)
Fruits, including berries and melons	124 (5.9)	573 (27.1)	1,342 (63.5)	205 (9.2)	705 (31.6)	1,256 (56.3)
Vegetables, sprouts and leafy greens	120 (5.7)	550 (26.0)	1,381 (65.3)	201 (9.0)	718 (32.2)	1,251 (56.0)

Q: In your opinion, how risky are the following foods to eat if not stored, prepared, and/or cooked correctly at home?

Percentages will not add up to 100% as those who selected 'Don't know' were not included in this table

Food safety behaviours

Respondents who indicated that they had some level of involvement in meal preparation at home (n = 2,037) were asked how often they practised a range of food safety behaviours. Approximately one third of respondents reported always avoiding providing higher risk foods to vulnerable persons (33.2%), refrigerating or freezing leftovers within 2 hours of cooking (35.3%) and consuming fridge leftovers within 2 to 3 days (34.2%) (Table 5). Only a small proportion of respondents reported never engaging in these behaviours (2 - 9%, depending on the behaviour).

As the behaviours assessed in 2025 differed from those in 2023 and 2024, year-on-year comparisons are not possible.

Table 5: Reported frequency of respondents' food safety behaviour (n = 2,037)

	1 - never n (%)	2 - n (%)	3 - n (%)	4 - more than half the time n (%)	5 - n (%)	6 - n (%)	7 - always n (%)
Avoid providing higher risk foods to vulnerable persons*	187 (9.2)	72 (3.5)	85 (4.2)	212 (10.4)	283 (13.9)	347 (17.0)	676 (33.2)
Refrigerate/freeze leftovers within 2 hours of cooking	86 (4.2)	78 (3.8)	103 (5.1)	315 (15.5)	344 (16.9)	391 (19.2)	720 (35.3)
Eat fridge leftovers within 2 to 3 days	41 (2.0)	58 (2.8)	87 (4.3)	324 (15.9)	372 (18.3)	458 (22.5)	697 (34.2)

Q: How often do you do the following when preparing food at home? 1 = Never, 4 = About half the time, 7 = Always

* n = 175 (8.6%) stated 'I don't know what high risk foods are'

For food safety behaviours related to the preparation of raw meat, more than half of respondents (53 – 59%) reported always practicing 4 of the 5 behaviours assessed (Table 6). However, only 8.0% of participants reported always using a thermometer to check if chicken is cooked, while 43.8% reported never doing so.

Table 6: Reported frequency of respondents' food safety behaviour regarding the preparation of raw meat (n = 2,037)

	1 - never n (%)	2 - n (%)	3 - n (%)	4 - more than half the time n (%)	5 - n (%)	6 - n (%)	7 - always n (%)
Use a food thermometer to check chicken is cooked to at least 75°C	893 (43.8)	140 (6.9)	142 (7.0)	232 (11.4)	205 (10.1)	163 (8.0)	163 (8.0)
Keep raw meat and fish separate from ready-to-eat food in the fridge	39 (1.9)	24 (1.2)	48 (2.4)	164 (8.1)	227 (11.1)	362 (17.8)	1,085 (53.3)
After preparing/handling raw meat:							
-Wash hands thoroughly	14 (0.7)	21 (1.0)	28 (1.4)	160 (7.9)	187 (9.2)	369 (18.1)	1,205 (59.2)

	<i>1 - never n (%)</i>	<i>2 - n (%)</i>	<i>3 - n (%)</i>	<i>4 - more than half the time n (%)</i>	<i>5 - n (%)</i>	<i>6 - n (%)</i>	<i>7 - always n (%)</i>
-Wash chopping board/surface with hot soapy water	17 (0.8)	22 (1.1)	50 (2.5)	151 (7.4)	221 (10.8)	325 (16.0)	1,195 (58.7)
-Wash knife with hot soapy water	29 (1.4)	17 (0.8)	63 (3.1)	177 (8.7)	202 (9.9)	328 (16.1)	1,164 (57.1)

Those who selected 'not applicable – I don't use raw animal products' not included