FOOD STANDARDS
Australia • New Zealand
Te Mana Kounga Kai - Ahitereiria me Aotearoa

2026 Consumer Insights Tracker

Food safety knowledge, behaviours and concerns

November 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 and over. The sample is nationally representative based on interlocked quotas of age, gender and location. The survey includes proportionate representation across educational levels, and of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples in Australia and Māori in New Zealand.

This report presents the results pertaining to consumers' food safety knowledge, behaviours and concerns. Full details on the methodology and sample can be found in the module *'Methods, sample and survey instrument'*.

This document reports 2026 results unless otherwise specified. Due to rounding, figures may not add up to 100%. Statistically significant changes between the multi-year trend and the 2026 results, or by country in 2026 (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

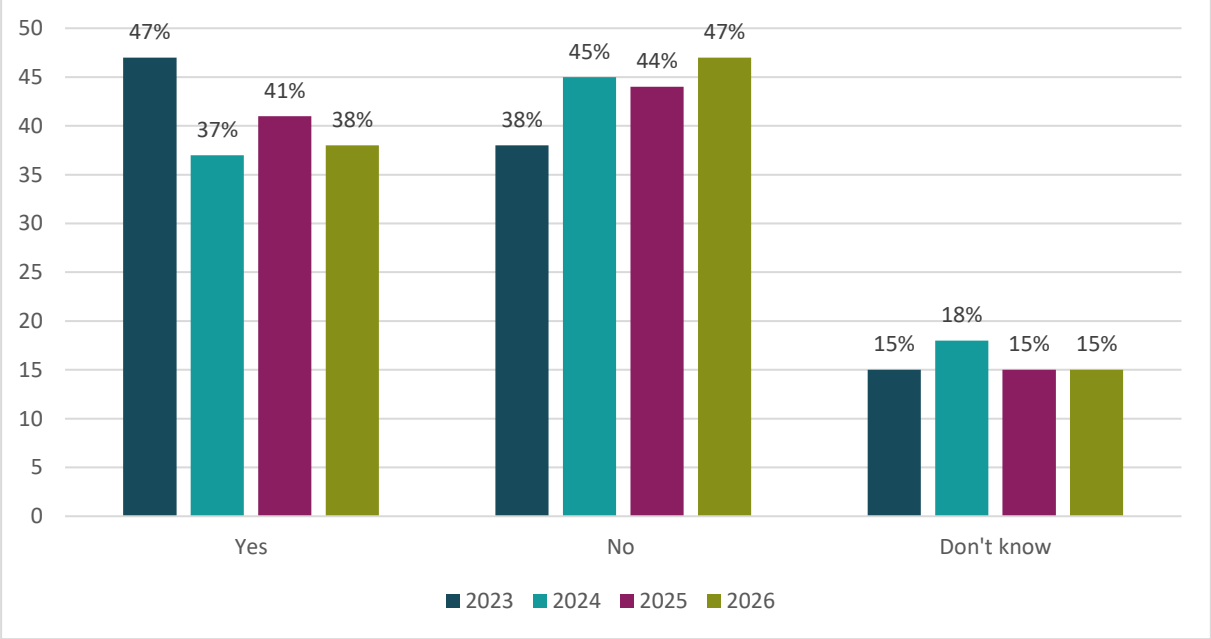
- Food recall awareness has remained steady, with 38% of consumers recalling a food recall in the past 12 months, unchanged from 2025.
- Food poisoning remained the top food safety concern (21%), followed by chemicals from the environment in food (14%) and foreign objects (14%).
- Raw poultry (79%) and raw seafood and shellfish (74%) are considered the highest-risk foods if not stored, prepared, and/or cooked correctly at home.
- Around 7 in 10 respondents considered food poisoning from home as common, compared with about 6 in 10 for food from a restaurant.
- Suspected food poisoning in the last 30 days was reported by 7% of respondents, with 46% seeking medical advice or testing.
- Most respondents (88%) knew undercooked chicken could cause food poisoning even if it looked cooked outside.
- Nearly 30% washed raw chicken always or most of the time.
- Cutting into chicken to see if it was still pink or whether the juices ran clear (68% overall) was the most common method used to check if chicken is cooked. Few respondents used a food thermometer (16%).
- Most respondents always washed their hands (65%) and always cleaned surfaces after preparing raw meat (71%). Separation behaviours were performed less consistently, with 54% always using a separate knife and 53% using a separate chopping board.

Results

Food recall knowledge

In 2026, 38.3% of respondents remembered a food recall happening over the last 12 months. While this is lower than recall figures reported in 2025 (41.1%), the difference was not significant (Figure 1). Nearly half of New Zealand respondents (46.3%) recalled a food recall occurring in the previous 12 months, compared with one-third of Australian respondents (33.5%). This difference was statistically significant (Table 1).

Figure 1: Knowledge of food recalls by year, 2023 - 2026



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

Table 1: Knowledge of food recalls by country

	Australia n (%)	New Zealand n (%)	Total n (%)
No	737 (50.1)	367 (42.0)	1,104 (47.1)
Yes	493^ (33.5)	404^ (46.3)	897 (38.3)
Can't say/don't know	241 (16.4)	102 (11.7)	343 (14.6)

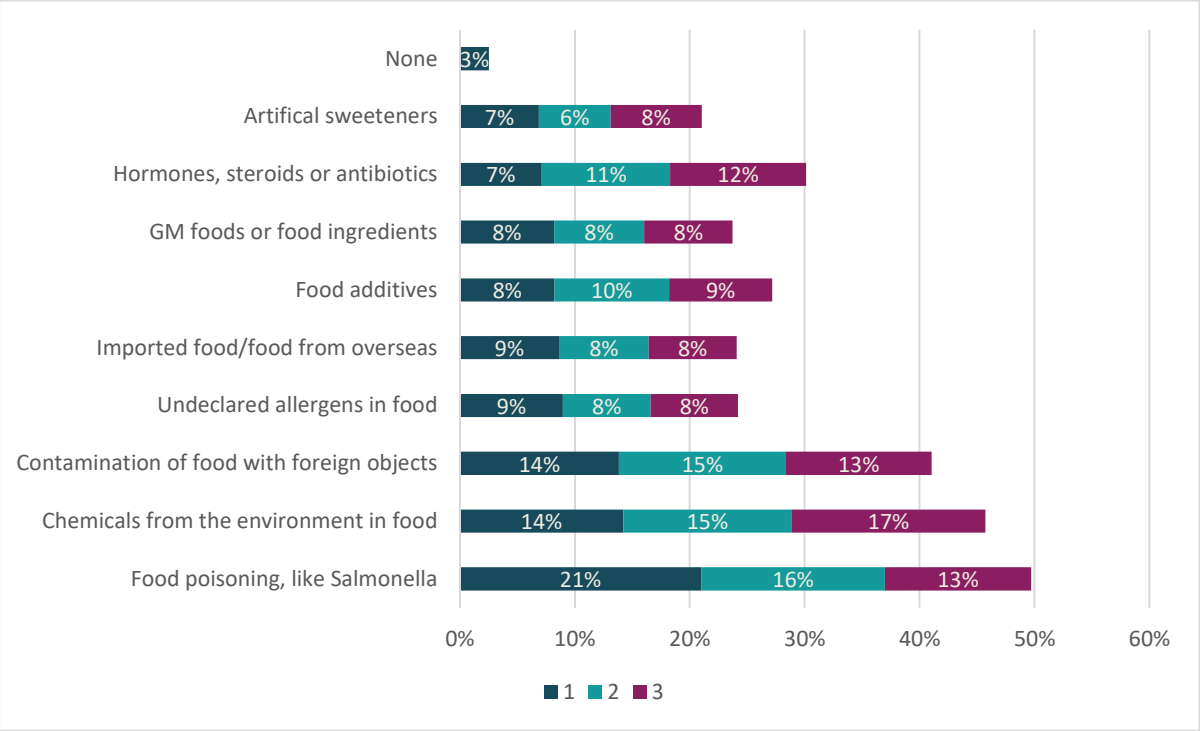
^ Difference between groups was statistically significant

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

Food safety concerns

Food poisoning, chemicals from the environment and contamination of food with foreign objects were respondents top 3 food safety concerns (Figure 2 and Table 2). The same 3 food safety concerns have remained the leading first-choice concerns since measurement began in 2023. However, while remaining the most important food safety concern, the proportion of consumers who rated food poisoning most important declined significantly from 25.9% in 2025 to 21.2% in 2026.

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

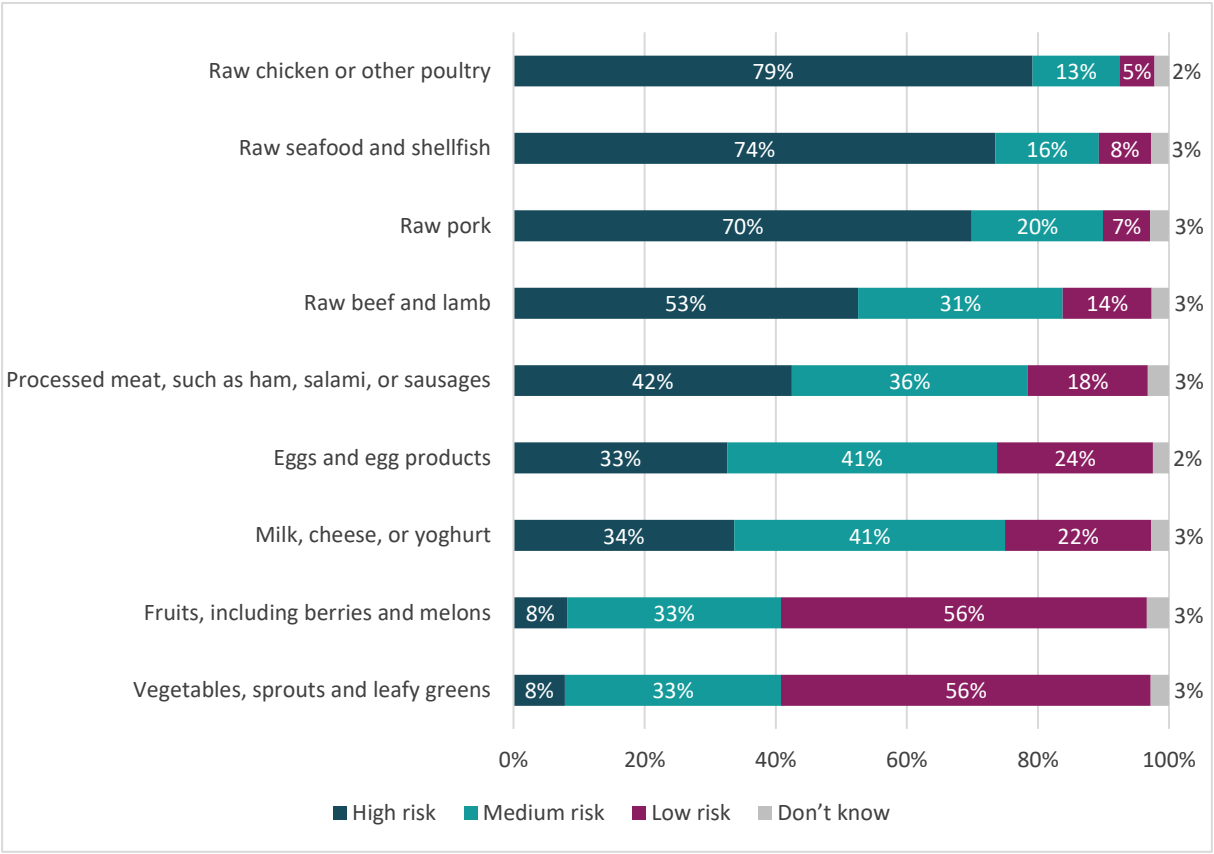
	1 – Most important *n* (%)	2 – Second most important *n* (%)	3 – Third most important *n* (%)
Food poisoning	496 (21.2)	375 (16.0)	298 (12.7)
Chemicals from the environment in food	333 (14.2)	343 (14.6)	396 (16.9)
Contamination of food with foreign objects	324 (13.8)	341 (14.6)	297 (12.7)
Undeclared allergens in food	210 (9.0)	179 (7.6)	178 (7.6)
Imported food/food from overseas	202 (8.6)	183 (7.8)	179 (7.6)
Food additives	193 (8.2)	234 (10.0)	210 (9.0)
Genetically modified foods	192 (8.2)	184 (7.9)	180 (7.7)
Hormones, steroids and/or antibiotics in farm animal products	167 (7.1)	262 (11.2)	277 (11.8)
Artificial sweeteners	161 (6.9)	146 (16.2)	186 (7.9)
None of the above		59 (2.5)	
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

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). Seventy-nine percent of respondents rated raw chicken or poultry as high risk (13.2% medium, 5.4% low), compared to 73.5% for raw seafood or shellfish (15.8% medium, 7.9% low). Vegetables and leafy greens (7.8% of respondents rated these as high risk) and fruits including berries and melons (8.2%) were perceived as the least risky foods.

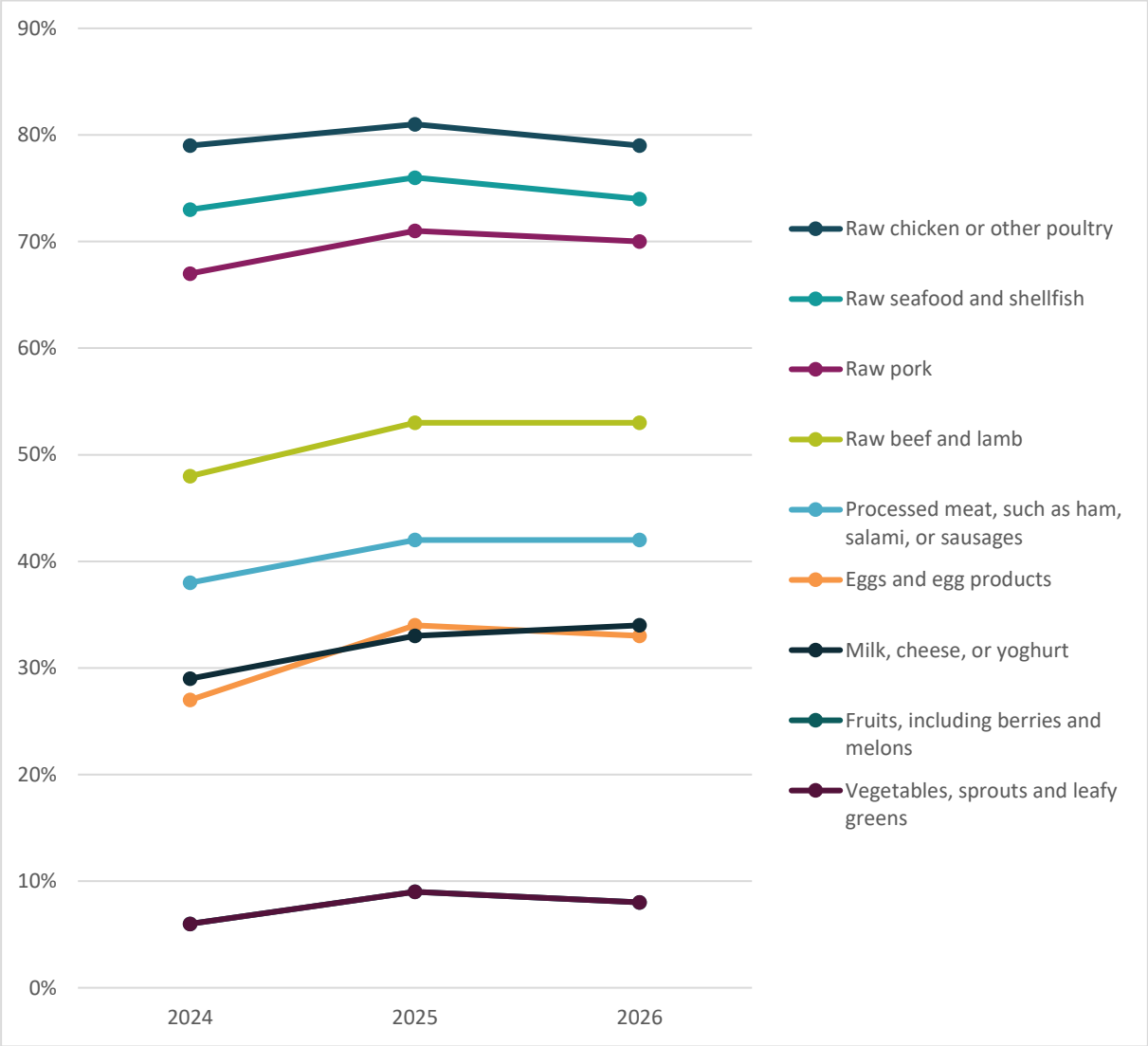
Figure 3: Foods ranked according to their perceived risk



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].

The relative ranking of perceived risks of foods remained generally consistent across years, with raw poultry and seafood most commonly perceived as high risk and fruit and vegetables least commonly perceived as high risk (Figure 4).

Figure 4: Proportion of respondents raking each food safety issue as 'high risk', 2024[1] - 2026



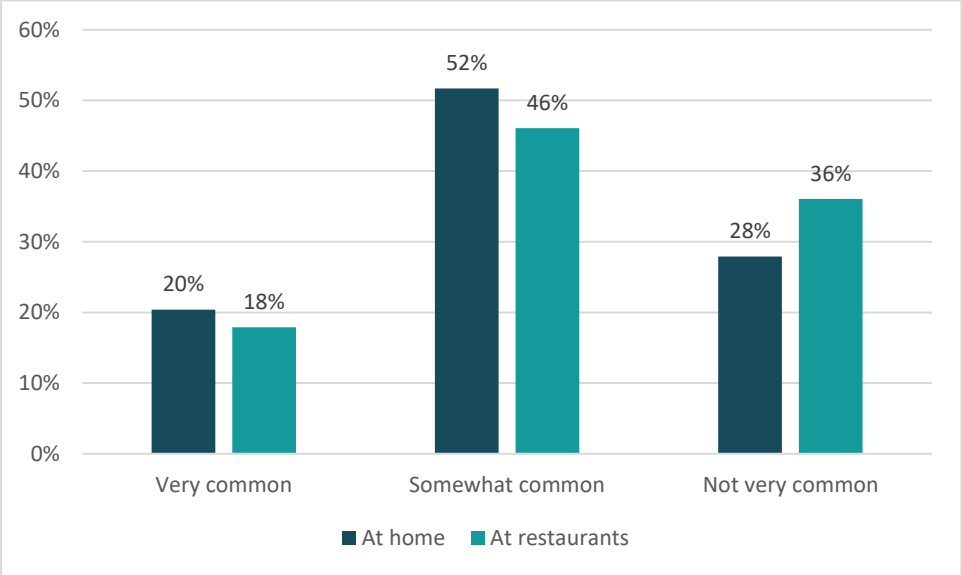
Q: In your opinion, how risky are the following foods to eat if not stored, prepared, and/or cooked correctly at home?

[1] This question was asked differently in 2023 so no time point for this year is available

Food poisoning

Respondents believed getting food poisoning was slightly more common for food prepared at home than in a restaurant. 72.1% of respondents rating food poisoning at home as very or somewhat common, compared with 64.0% for restaurants (Figure 5).

Figure 5: Perceived occurrence of food poisoning from food prepared at home and in restaurants.



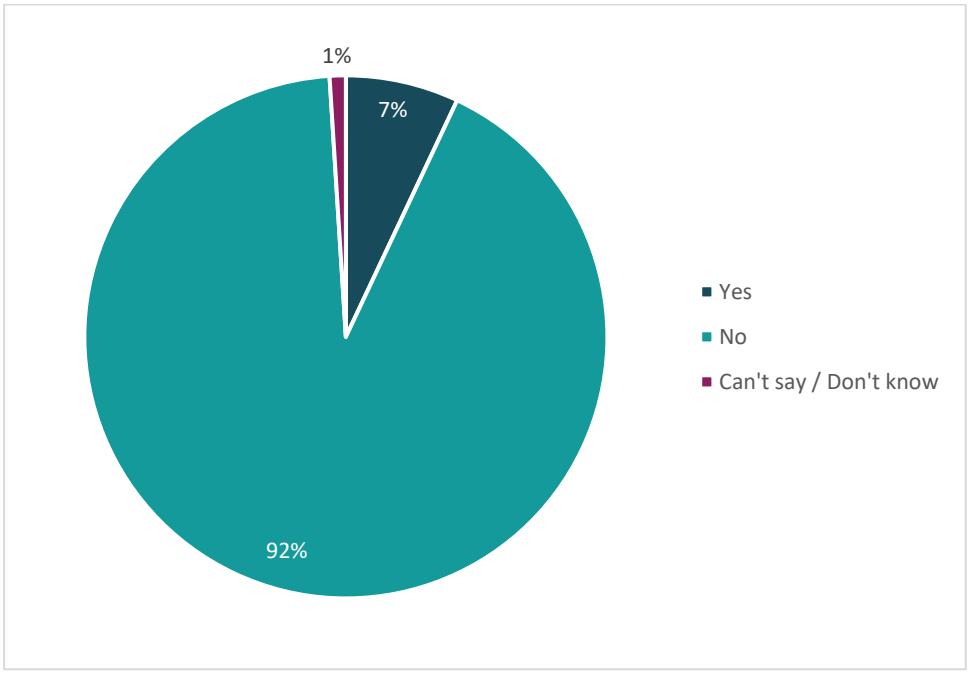
Q: How common do you think it is for people to get food poisoning because of the way food is prepared at home and at restaurants?

Overall, 153 (7%) respondents reported a suspected food poisoning episode in the last 30 days[2] (Figure 6). Among those who reported suspected food poisoning, 70 (46%) respondents sought advice or testing from a medical professional.

Self-reported suspected food poisoning differed significantly by reported food allergy status. Among respondents who reported a food allergy, 12.4% reported suspected food poisoning, compared with 5.8% of respondents who did not report a food allergy.

[2] Respondents were asked whether, in the past 30 days, they had experienced vomiting or diarrhoea that they thought may have been related to food poisoning.

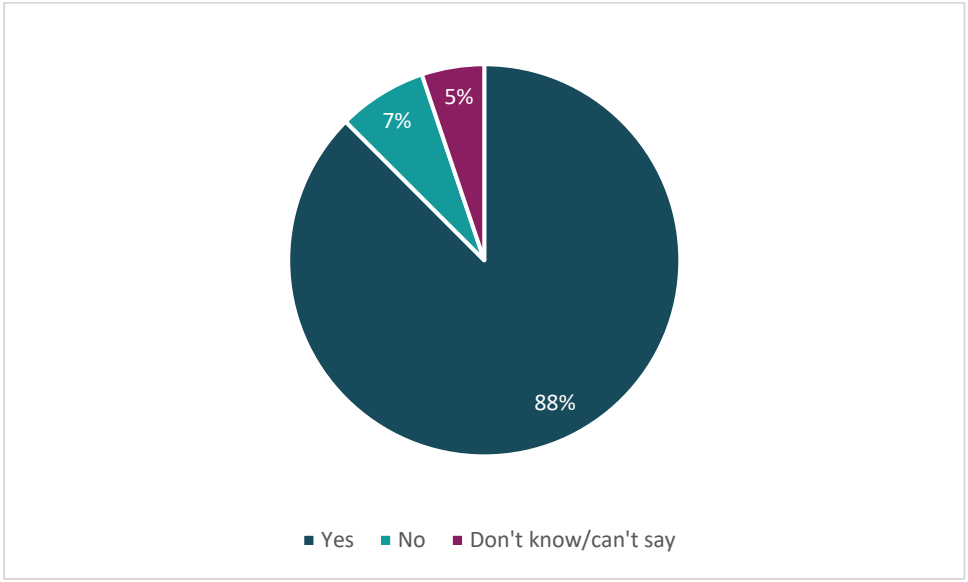
Figure 6: Self-reported suspected food poisoning in the past 30 days



Q: In the past 30 days, have you experienced vomiting or diarrhoea that you thought was food poisoning?

The majority of respondents (88%) believed that undercooked chicken, even if it looks cooked on the outside, could cause food poisoning, 5% were unsure or did not know (Figure 7).

Figure 7: Belief that undercooked chicken remains risky even when it looks cooked



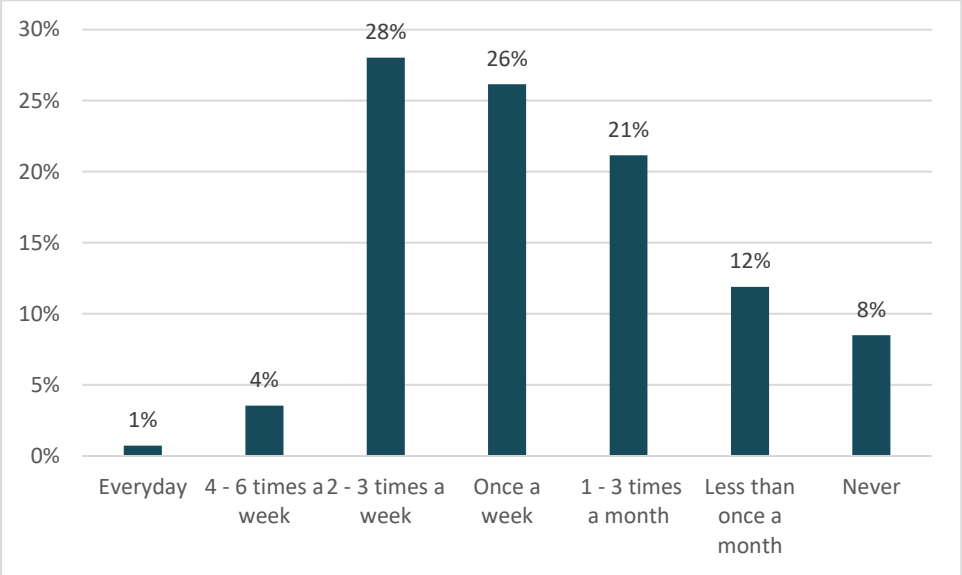
Q: Do you believe undercooked chicken can cause food poisoning even if it looks cooked on the outside?

Food safety behaviours

Washing raw chicken

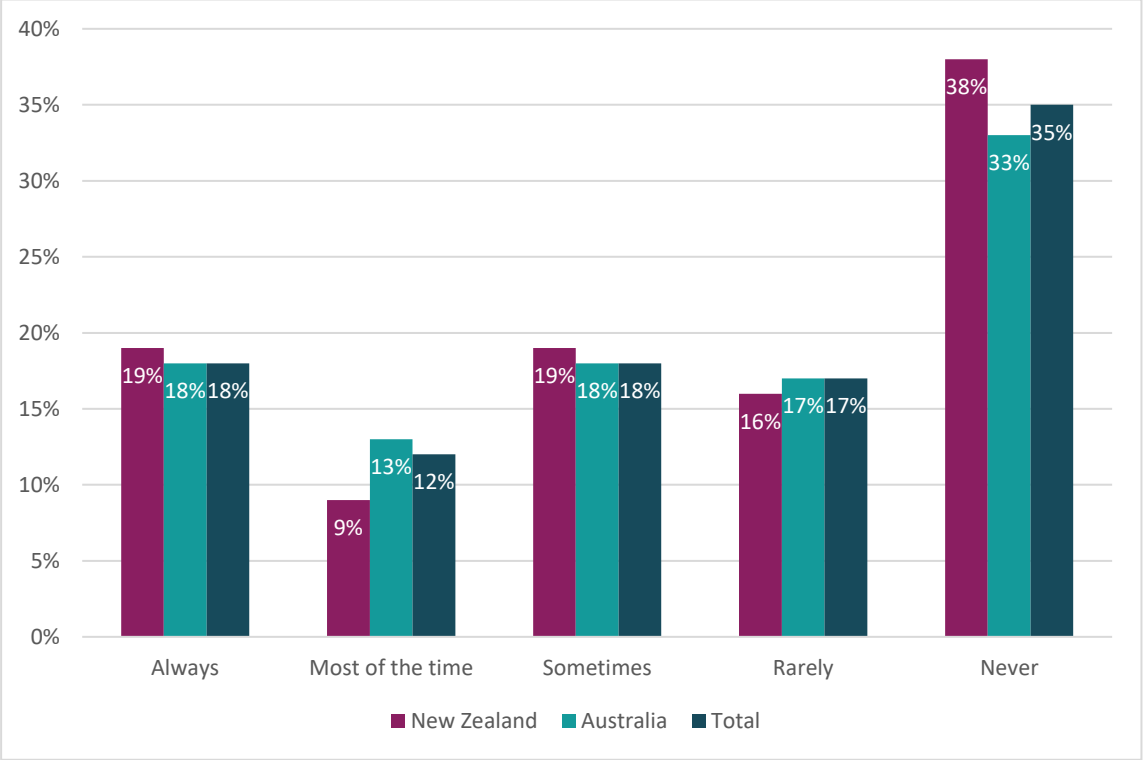
Most respondents cooked raw chicken at home at least occasionally. The most common frequencies were 2 – 3 times a week (28.0%), once a week (26.2%) and 1–3 times a month (21.2%); 11.9% cooked it less than once a month, while 8.5% never did (Figure 8).

Figure 8: Frequency of cooking raw chicken at home



Among the 2,145 respondents who prepared chicken at home, nearly one-third reported washing raw chicken before cooking, (18% reporting 'always' and 12% 'most of the time') (Figure 9). Respondents from New Zealand were more likely to report never washing chicken prior to cooking compared to respondents from Australia (38% vs. 33%).

Figure 9: Reported frequency of washing raw chicken before cooking, overall and by country (%) (n = 2,145)

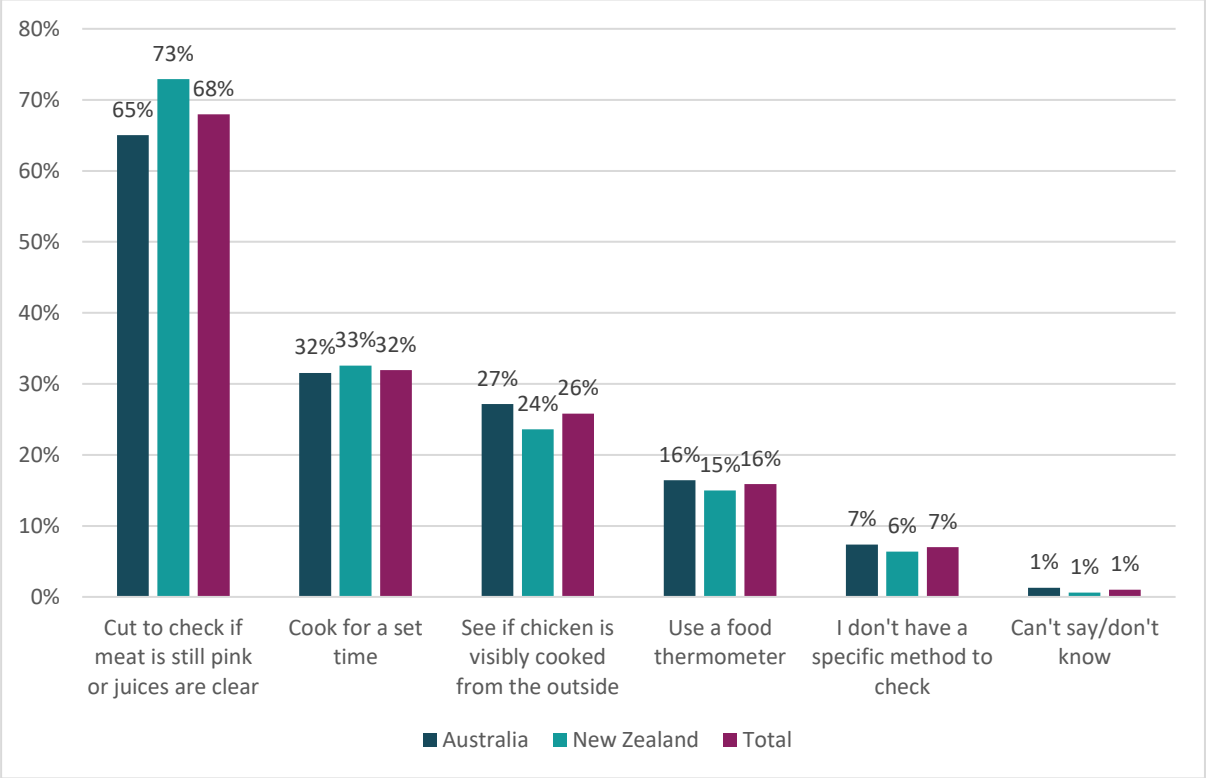


Q: When preparing raw chicken, do you usually wash it before cooking?

Food safety behaviours cooking chicken

Cutting into chicken to see if it was still pink or whether the juices ran clear (67.7% overall) was the most common method used to check if chicken is cooked (Figure 10). Around one-third of respondents reported cooking chicken for a set time (31.9%) and around one-quarter checked whether the chicken appeared cooked on the outside (25.8%). Fewer respondents used a food thermometer (15.9%), while only a small proportion reported having no specific method to check doneness (7.0%). Results were generally similar between Australia and New Zealand. These behaviours were only assessed in 2026, so year-on-year comparisons are not possible.

Figure 10: Reported behaviours relating to safe cooking of raw chicken, overall and by country (n = 2,145).



Q: How do you usually check that chicken is properly cooked?

Preparation of raw meat

Among respondents who prepared raw meat at home (n = 2,085)[3] most reported safe handling practices. More than 80% said they washed their hands, utensils and preparation surfaces after handling raw meant most or all of the time. However, practices to keep surfaces/boards/utensils used for the preparation of raw meat separate from other foods was less consistent, with around 50 to 55% saying they 'always' followed these practices. These questions were asked slightly differently in 2025, so year-on-year comparisons are not possible.

[3] Those who selected 'not applicable – I don't prepare raw meat' (n = 71) and/or who indicated that someone else did the majority of the preparing and cooking meals for the household (n = 188) were not asked these questions

Table 3: Reported frequency of respondents' food safety behaviour regarding the preparation or handling of raw meat (n = 2,085)

	Never	*Rarely*	*Sometimes*	*Most of the time*	Always
	n **(%)**	***n*** **(%)**	***n*** **(%)**	***n*** **(%)**	***n*** **(%)**
Wash hands thoroughly with soap and water	21 (1.0)	57 (2.7)	253 (12.1)	397 (19.0)	1,357 (65.1)
Wash chopping board/surface with hot soapy water before using again	19 (0.9)	58 (2.8)	189 (9.1)	336 (16.1)	1,483 (71.1)
Wash knife/utensils with hot soapy water before using it again	19 (0.9)	52 (2.5)	167 (8.0)	337 (16.2)	1,510 (72.4)
Use separate knife/utensils	90 (4.3)	124 (5.9)	312 (15.0)	431 (20.7)	1,128 (54.1)
Use separate chopping board/surface	137 (6.6)	158 (7.6)	301 (14.4)	393 (18.8)	1,096 (52.6)

Q: After preparing/handling raw meat (e.g. red meat, chicken or seafood), do you: