

Consumer Food Safety Behavior: A Case Study in Hamburger Cooking and Ordering. By Katherine Ralston, C. Philip Brent, YoLanda Starke, Toija Riggins, and C.-T. Jordan Lin. Food and Rural Economics Division, Economic Research Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture. Agricultural Economic Report No. 804.

Abstract

More Americans are eating hamburgers more well-done than in the past, according to national surveys. This change reduced the risk of *E. coli* O157:H7 infection by an estimated 4.6 percent and reduced associated medical costs and productivity losses by an estimated \$7.4 million annually. In a 1996 survey, respondents who were more concerned about the risk of foodborne illness cooked and ordered hamburgers more well-done than those who were less concerned. However, respondents who strongly preferred hamburgers less well-done cooked and ordered them that way, even after accounting for their concern about the risk of illness.

Keywords: hamburger doneness, ground beef, food safety, food safety education, *E. coli* O157:H7, consumer behavior, survey, risk, foodborne illness, risk perceptions, palatability, information, microbial pathogens.

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