

Title Results from a Pilot Survey on Domestic Handling of Meat and Poultry in Christchurch, New Zealand
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Abstract

To improve quantitative risk assessments for foodborne pathogens in New Zealand, preliminary data on domestic handling of meat and poultry has been gathered during a pilot survey in Christchurch. Meat and poultry were usually bought fresh, rather than frozen; 49/52 respondents (94%) bought 80% or more of their meat fresh, and 33/52 (63%) respondents bought 80% or more of their poultry fresh. Most respondents transported their food home by car (50/53; 94%) and 47/53 (89%) took less than an hour to do so. Just two respondents (2/52; 4%) used an insulated container for transporting meat and poultry home. However, 25/52 (48%) usually packed chilled/frozen meat and poultry with other frozen foods or wrapped the meat/poultry in thick newspaper to carry home. Approximately 70% of the meat or poultry was reported to be frozen at home following transport. Thawing preferences included: refrigerator (20%); room temperature (44%); and microwaving (30%). A total of 22/40 (55%) respondents usually used an automated dishwasher to wash up. Questions about food safety behaviors (handwashing before and after food preparation, use of utensils and surfaces for different foods, reheating leftovers, etc.) elicited a high proportion of "correct" answers in this survey, although other studies have demonstrated a difference between reported and observed behaviours. The majority of respondents reported that they always prepared the main meal (63%) and most were female (75%). Although this survey of predominantly urban respondents may not be representative of New Zealand as a whole, information about purchasing and storage behaviours will be useful.