

**TITLE:** FOOD SAFETY: FOOD HYGIENE, HANDLING AND STORAGE PRACTICES IN BRAZILIAN RESIDENCES.

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**ABSTRACT:**

Epidemiological data from Brazil and the world show that most outbreaks of foodborne illnesses occur in homes, but information on hygiene practices, handling and storage of food in Brazilian homes is scarce. This study aimed to obtain information on hygiene practices during the handling and storage of food in Brazilian homes. In addition to obtaining temperature data from domestic refrigerators. For this, an online questionnaire consisting of 29 questions was applied, with anonymous participation, through Google Forms. The temperature was collected during three days from 216 refrigerators of participants residing in the State of Sao Paulo. A total of 5,000 individuals from all Brazilian states responded to the questionnaire, with a majority participation of females, aged between 25 and 35 years and with an income of up to four minimum wages. The results showed that regarding the cleaning of fruits, only 28.5% participants sanitize as recommended: with running water and a chlorinated solution. The handling and consumption of animal products was also evaluated, 46.3% of the participants said they have the habit of sanitizing meat in the kitchen sink, 24.1% usually consume undercooked meat and 17.4% usually consume raw or undercooked eggs. Analyzing the purchase of food in supermarkets, most participants (81%) said they do not use thermal bags to transport refrigerated or frozen food to their homes. Inadequacy was found in relation to the time to store food in the refrigerator or freezer after meals, 11.2% said they store it for more than two hours later. It was also evidenced that it was common among the participants to thaw food at room temperatures (39.5%) or inside a container with water (16.9%). Regarding the temperature of refrigerators, 91% of the records collected are between the recommended 0 to 10°C. In the context of hygiene practices, handling and storage of food, there are still certain actions performed inappropriately by a significant part of Brazilians. Thus, more communication actions on food safety for the population are essential as a way to prevent foodborne diseases.

**Keywords:** Food safety; hygiene practices; microbiological risk; temperature of refrigerators.

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