



Celebrity Chefs - A Good Example?

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Cooking shows are a great way to learn how to prepare new foods. It's also an opportunity to learn cooking skills and tips, but it is not the best place to see food safety practices in action. Recent studies show these programs may pose a public health threat, if the food safety practices of the chefs are copied.

Research out of Kansas State University reveals these shows often show unsafe food preparation and cooking practices. The study in the Journal of Public Health

examines 100 cooking shows that involve 24 popular celebrity chefs, observing their food safety behaviors while on air.

The study found the most common mistakes included lack of handwashing, failure to change cutting boards between ingredients and failure to use a thermometer when cooking meat. All of these can cause foodborne bacteria to develop.

The University of Massachusetts, Amherst conducted a similar study. This study involved a group of state regulators and food practitioners

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completing a 19 question survey which measured safe food practices, use of utensils and gloves, protection from contamination, and time and temperature control. The panel completed the survey while watching

10 popular cooking shows. In at least 70 percent of episodes, the majority of practices rated were out of compliance or conformance with recommendations and food safety practices were mentioned in only 3 episodes.

According to the Center for Disease Control, about 1 in 6 Americans are exposed to foodborne illnesses each year. This equals about 48 million people in the U.S., contributing to 5,000 hospitalizations and 3,000 deaths.

Cookbooks and Food Safety

A study out of North Carolina State University examined 29 cookbooks from the New York Times' food and diet best sellers list, including over 1,700 recipes, and found potential problems in the language being used. According to the lead author on the study, "Many of the cookbooks gave subjective ways to tell the food was done. Over 99 percent of recipes mentioned at least one non-science-based way to determine doneness."

These subjective comments included using the color of the meat or amount of time cooked as ways to determine if food is cooked

properly. Neither are science-based and increase the risk of foodborne illness.

73 percent of surveyed consumers who took part in the Massachusetts study used a variety of media for their food safety information. According to a 2016 food and health survey by the International Food Information Council, 4 out of 10 people were likely to use a thermometer if cookbooks listed proper cooking temperatures in the directions. This shows that instructions given in various forms of media, including cookbooks, may affect the way consumers behave in their own kitchen.

4 Steps to Food Safety



Don't be a TV Chef at home. Always make sure you are following safe food handling practices. Use these four simple steps:

- Clean—wash your hands and surfaces often
- Separate—don't cross-contaminate
- Cook—to the right temperature
- Chill—refrigerate promptly

Source: www.befoodsafe.org