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Food Recalls Affect Millions of Americans in 2024

Published Sep 10, 2024 at 6:00 AM EDT Updated Sep 11, 2024 at 5:40 AM EDT

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What Is A Food Recall And What To Do If Your Food Is Recalled?

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Millions of Americans are being impacted by food recalls every year as trust in food safety reaches a record low, according to a new survey.

Polling conducted by Gallup between July 1 and July 21 found that 37 percent of Americans reported discarding or returning food in the past year due to a product recall or food safety advisory. Just over half the 1,010 respondents—53 percent—said they have avoided buying specific brands or types of food because of a recall or advisory, while 26 percent expressed concern that they may have consumed contaminated food.

Food recalls are enacted when a product is found to be in violation of laws administered by federal agencies, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration ([FDA](#)) and the Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS). They are most often issued when a product contains undeclared allergens, harmful viruses or foreign objects.

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The polling comes against a backdrop of rising food recalls, some of which have been headline news in recent weeks. [A major outbreak of listeria from a Boar's Head factory in Virginia has killed nine people](#) and hospitalized dozens of others this summer.



A basket of goods sits in the aisle of a grocery store. Hundreds of food recalls are made every year by health authorities when manufacturers break federal regulations that could result in hazards to the... GETTY

Confidence in the ability of federal government agencies to ensure food safety in the U.S. supply chain is also dwindling. Fifty-seven percent of American adults say they have either "a great deal" or "fair" amount of faith in the U.S. government to keep food supply safe, while 28 percent report little confidence, and 14 percent have none at all.

Overall, between 2006 and 2024, confidence in food safety has dropped by 23 points. Gallup found that, from 1999 to 2006, about 80 percent of Americans expressed confidence in the government's ability to ensure food safety.

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[Following a significant salmonella outbreak in 2007](#) that [resulted in thousands of illnesses](#), around 70 percent remained confident, a 10-point drop. That confidence level held steady in 2008 and 2019 before declining this year.



The confidence of [Republicans](#) has seen the largest decline since 2019, which Gallup says is likely to reflects the change in the party of the incumbent president—from [Republican Donald Trump](#) to Democrat [Joe Biden](#). As of July, 50 percent of Republicans express confidence in the government's ability to ensure food safety, a 27-point drop from 2019.

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