



Home Food Safety™

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A Collaboration Between



# Desktop Dining Survey: 2011 Results

*Americans' Food Safety  
Knowledge and Practice at Work*

## Key Findings

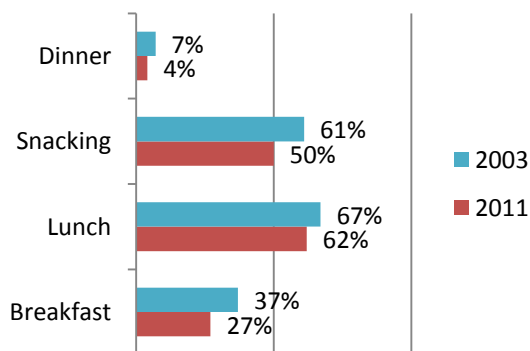
The following are major findings from the Home Food Safety program's 2011 Desktop Dining survey. The study builds upon the 2003 Desktop Dining survey, sharing further insights into consumer food handling and preparation practices at work.

## Eating Patterns at Work

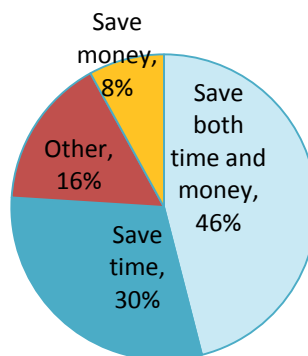
**Desktops still double as kitchen tables for many Americans.**

- Desktop dining is on the decline versus 2003, though 83 percent still claim to typically eat both meals and snacks at their desk.
- Respondents across all demographic groups are eating the most at their desks for lunch (62 percent) and snacks (50 percent), while 27 percent are eating breakfast at work and 4 percent dinner.
- The most important reason Americans are eating at their desks is to save both time and money.

**Q. Which meals do you typically eat at your desk?**



**Q. What is the main reason you eat at your desk?**



## Eating Patterns at Work by Gender

Females are more likely to say they snack throughout the day, as are the younger respondents. The few who eat dinner at the desk tend to be younger and are most likely to eat breakfast and lunch at their desks as well.

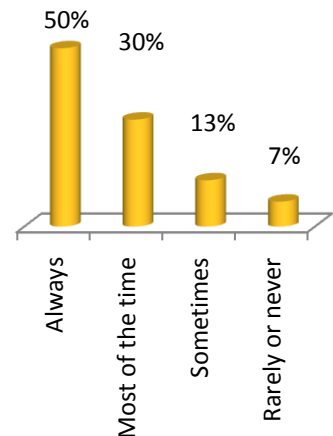
- Females (60 percent) are more likely to snack at their desks throughout the day compared to 42 percent of males.
- Those that eat at their desk the most are between 18- and 24-years-old. Of this age group, 37 percent report eating breakfast at their desk, 70 percent report eating lunch at their desk, 72 percent report snacking throughout the day at their desk and 10 percent report eating dinner at their desk.

## Cleanliness at Work

Washing hands and surfaces is still not a priority for many Americans.

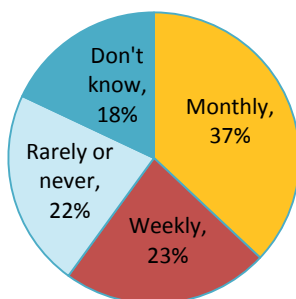
- Only 50 percent responded they always wash their hands before they eat lunch at work.
- In eight years, there has only been a 2 percent increase in the amount of Americans who report that they always wash their hands before they eat lunch at work (48 percent in 2003).
- Cleaning work areas is not of high importance, as only 36 percent do so weekly and 64 percent do so only once a month or less. Additionally, 45 percent of men report they rarely or never clean their work area compared to 30 percent of women.
- Virtually all workplaces now have a refrigerator (97 percent) but office refrigerator cleaning is even less rigorous, as only 23 percent do so weekly and a full 40 percent of respondents don't know if it is cleaned or rarely/never do so.

*Q. How often do you wash your hands before eating lunch at work?*



## Storage

*Q. If your office has a refrigerator or freezer to store your food how often is it cleaned?*



In the past eight years, safe food storage habits have remained constant, with a bit of an increase in the use of coolers or insulated bags; a full 70 out of 100 respondents say they store their lunches in refrigerators.

- To reduce the risk of foodborne illness, perishable foods should not be left out of refrigeration for more than two hours, yet nearly half (49 percent) of those surveyed admitted to leaving their lunches that require refrigeration out of the refrigerator/cooler/freezer for three hours or more.

## Lunchtime Patterns

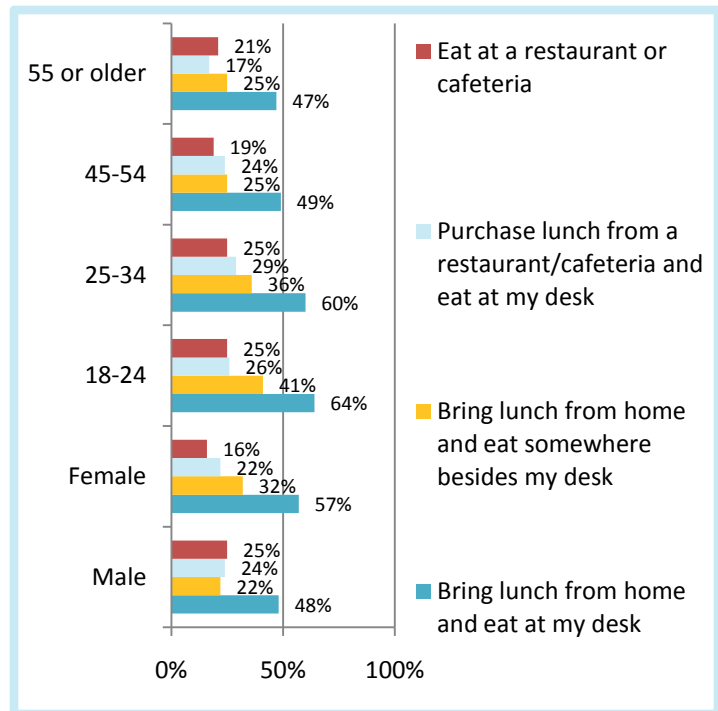
The most typical pattern is to bring lunch from home and eat it at the desk, while half as many eat away from the desk with either a purchased or brown-bag lunch. Slightly fewer go out to a restaurant or a cafeteria.

- Fifty-two percent bring lunch from home and eat it at their desk and 27 percent bring lunch from home and eat it somewhere else. Twenty-three percent purchase lunch from a restaurant/cafeteria and eat it at their desk, while 21 percent eat at a restaurant or cafeteria and 9 percent answered other.

## Lunchtime Patterns by Gender and Age

**Males are more likely to say they do not bring lunch to work; while females are more likely to store their lunch in a refrigerator.**

- More males reported that they do not bring lunch to work (17 percent) than females (5 percent).
- Females are more likely (77 percent) to say they store their lunch in the refrigerator, while only 59 percent of males said the same.
- Of respondents age 55 or older, 16 percent reported they do not bring a lunch, making them the least likely group to do so.



*\*HealthFocus International conducted the home food safety survey in April 2011 for the American Dietetic Association and ConAgra Foods through an online survey of a random sample of 2,191 full-time employees, both men and women, who work at a desk. The sample was chosen to closely match U.S. population demographics.*

Visit [www.homefoodsafety.org](http://www.homefoodsafety.org) for more information and tips on reducing your risk of foodborne illness whether in the home or at the office.