



# Where Germs Lurk

© 2013 NSF International Household Germ Study



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Common kitchen appliances and tools harboring unsafe levels of *E. coli*, *Salmonella*, *Listeria*, yeast and mold may be a contributing factor to foodborne illness, according to a recent study by NSF International, an independent global public health and safety organization.

Studies have shown that more than

**20% OF FOODBORNE ILLNESS OUTBREAKS**

result from food that was consumed in the home.

(According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov))



## CONTRIBUTING FACTORS:

1. improper food storage
2. food handling
3. food preparation

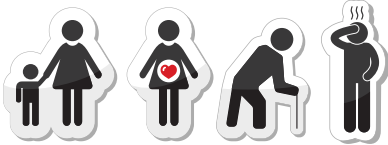


## Study Results

Because NSF evaluates the cleanability of common household kitchen tools and appliances under the NSF Home Products Certification Program, NSF wondered whether consumers actually follow manufacturer cleaning instructions. As part of the 2013 NSF International

Germ Study, NSF's microbiologist analyzed 14 common kitchen items for the presence of four different types of microorganisms: *E. coli*, *Salmonella*, *Listeria*, and yeast and mold.

### AT-RISK POPULATIONS:



These germ study findings are most concerning for households with at-risk populations such as **children, pregnant women, the elderly** or those with a **compromised immune system** (from illness).

### E. coli



**36%** of items tested positive for *E. coli*

Appliances and tools that required disassembly for proper cleaning were found to harbor *E. coli* contamination in many households:

1. Refrigerator meat compartment
2. Rubber spatula
3. Blender gasket
4. Can opener
5. Pizza cutter



### Salmonella



**36%** of items tested positive for *Salmonella*

Areas where raw food is stored proved to be a place where germs like to hide:

1. Refrigerator vegetable compartment
2. Refrigerator meat compartment
3. Blender gasket
4. Can opener
5. Food storage container with rubber seal



### Listeria



**14%** of items tested positive for *Listeria*

Dark moist environments breed germs, even in the refrigerator:

1. Refrigerator vegetable compartment
2. Refrigerator insulating seal



### Yeast & Mold



**43%** of items tested at concerning levels for yeast and mold

All items tested positive for yeast and mold, but the most concerning areas were:

1. Refrigerator vegetable compartment
2. Rubber spatula
3. Blender gasket
4. Refrigerator ice dispenser
5. Refrigerator water dispenser
6. Food storage container with rubber seal



## Staying Safe

NSF has worked to help ensure the safe design and cleaning of food equipment and appliances used in food preparation since the 1940s, focusing on equipment used in restaurants. NSF's Home Product Certification Program began in 2012, addressing

kitchen appliances and tools used in the home. In addition to evaluating performance, durability and materials, the program evaluates manufacturers' cleaning instructions to help prevent equipment from harboring pathogens that can cause foodborne illness.

### Cleaning Tips

Cleaning tips are available online at [www.nsf.org/consumer](http://www.nsf.org/consumer)

### Look for the Mark



Look for the NSF Mark on product packaging

### Contact Us



Email the NSF Consumer Affairs Office [info@nsf.org](mailto:info@nsf.org)