

Summary of results

Survey of Spaniards' hygiene habits in the kitchen

This document summarizes the results of the Survey of Spaniards' hygiene habits in the kitchen. This survey has been prepared by the Silestone Institute for kitchen hygiene between September 22 and October 1, 2009 using a representative sample of the Spanish population.

Concern and need for information

70% of respondents believe that microbes harmful to health are present in the kitchen area. There is a very high degree of agreement on this (8.9 on a scale of 1 to 10).

Among this group, **young people aged 25 to 39 are the population group that is most aware of the importance of hygiene in the kitchen.** Specifically, they are aware that this part of the house harbors germs that can prove harmful to the health of household members. Older people (55 to 74 years) believe to a lesser extent that the kitchen is a source of infection.

Broken down by region, **southern Spain and the islands are the places where the concern is highest** while northern Spain features the smallest percentage of people who consider the kitchen as a place where germs breed.

However, despite the perception of the kitchen as a place with several hot spots that deserve specific attention and cleaning, the study notes that:

- There is great **ignorance** on sanitary measures that can be taken in the kitchen to prevent disease or poisoning. Specifically, **88% of the Spanish population does not know what to do** to improve the hygiene of their home and their kitchen in particular, or how to do it.
- This misinformation also extends to the type of products used to clean materials and equipment in the kitchen's various areas. Of those surveyed, 37.2% said they clean the kitchen with the same detergent used to wash dishes.

The kitchen's hot spots

The **critical points or hot spots for possible sources of infection** in the kitchen are, according to respondents, **dishcloths and the sink.** The **countertop** ranks third in terms of high risk of infection, with a score of 7 out of 10. Other elements follow the countertop, such as the food itself (contaminated at source or by improper handling), and finally, kitchen tools and utensils.

Taking into account antibacterial materials

There are hi-tech materials and equipment that, when installed in the kitchen, boost health and safety levels without substantially changing user habits. Many elements, like countertops, cloths, utensils, ovens and other appliances feature **antibacterial properties** that prevent the growth of pathogens that can contaminate food.

Of all study participants, **93.1% consider it important** for cooking equipment and materials **to have antibacterial properties**. The 40 to 54 year-old age group values this benefit the most.

Influence of the “swine flu” pandemic on hygiene in the kitchen

Although “swine flu” is not transmitted through food, the Silestone Institute survey analyses how kitchen habits have been altered as a result of this pandemic. Almost **half of the population (43.1%) says they changed their hygiene habits in the kitchen somehow**, with particularly significant changes in 19.1% of cases. The concern generated by the “swine flu” has caused major kitchen hygiene changes for Spanish youth (aged 25 to 39, 57.9% of cases), island residents (56.6%) and in the south of the country (54.6%).

More than half of the population (51%) changed their general hygiene habits somewhat. In particular, a quarter of individuals surveyed (24.1%), made dramatic, many or numerous changes to their habits. These people, aware of the role that hygiene plays in preventing infections, are mainly in the younger segment of the population studied, the 25 to 39 year-old age group (62.8% of this segment has changed their hygiene habits). In terms of location, hygiene habit changes are significant in the population of the islands and the east of Spain.

Survey data

The survey of hygiene habits in the kitchen has been prepared by the market research firm GFK-EMER for **Silestone Institute for kitchen hygiene**.

The sample is representative of the Spanish population aged 25 to 74, with a focused scope on household members who usually do some cleanup in the kitchen.

756 surveys have been conducted between September 22 and October 1. The interviews have been distributed by age, province and income level in proportion to population size.

Silestone Institute has also conducted this study in Portugal between September 29 and October 6 with a sample of 503 household surveys.

More information:

SILESTONE INSTITUTE FOR KITCHEN HYGIENE

Rambla Catalunya, 18, 1º

08007 Barcelona

institutosilestone@ulled.com

Tel. 93 481 36 20

www.institutosilestone.com