

We throw away too much good food

By Washington Post, adapted by Newsela staff on 07.17.15

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A goat searches for food in a trash container. Photo: AP Photo/Boris Grdanoski

Sometimes we have to eat food that is a day or two old. The food is not bad. It will not make us sick. It could be better. It could be fresh.

A school wanted to know how much food Americans throw away. The school found that Americans throw away a lot of food. They want to eat only fresh food. They are afraid food will make them sick.

Do Not Throw It Away Yet!

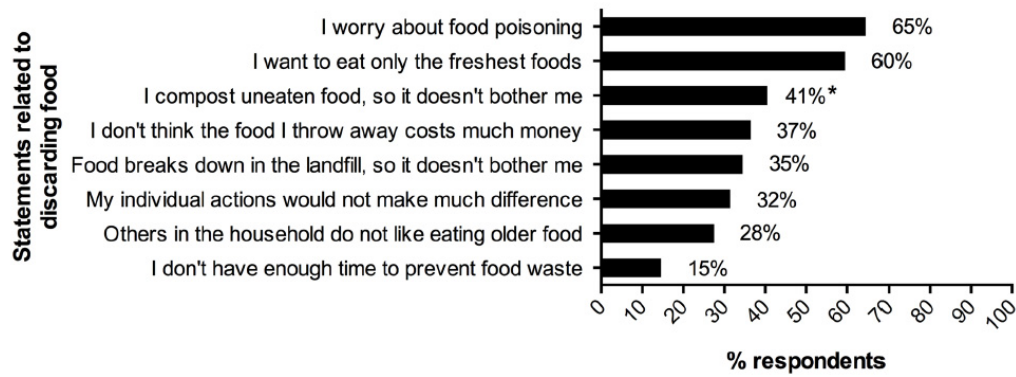


Fig 2. Agreement with Statements Related to Discarding Food. Responses regarding eight possible reasons for discarding food. Percentages indicate the proportion of respondents who chose each response. * Restricted to respondents reporting in a separate question that they compost at least some of their food; percentages for all other motivations reflect the entire sample.

Many people throw out food too soon. The food will not make them sick. It is only a few days old. These people do not worry. They have enough money to buy more food.

People care a lot about what they eat. Caring about food can be good. People now eat more fruits and vegetables. They spend more money on food. They buy more food from small family farms. They do not buy as much from giant food companies.

Caring about food can also be bad. People might throw out really good food. They only want to eat the freshest fruits and vegetables.

The Food Might Be Good

Every year, families throw more food in the trash.

Almost half of all waste comes from families. Families throw out more food than restaurants.

Sometimes people are confused. At the store, foods might have warning labels. The labels say when they should eat the food.

The labels can worry people. A label might say we should eat the food by Monday. Some people might throw it out on Sunday. They think the food will taste bad.

Sometimes food needs to be thrown away. Food can go bad. It can make us sick. But just because a food is not perfect does not mean you cannot eat it.

Quiz

- 1 Why are some people worried about throwing away food?
- (A) Every year, families throw more food in the trash.
 - (B) Families throw out more food than restaurants.
 - (C) At the store, foods might have warning labels.
 - (D) Sometimes food needs to be thrown away.
- 2 Which sentence explains a good effect of caring more about food?
- (A) The food will not make them sick.
 - (B) Foods now have warning labels.
 - (C) People now eat more fruits and vegetables.
 - (D) People might throw out really good food.

- 3 Fill in the blank in the sentence below.

The chart included with the article explains

- (A) why people throw food away.
 - (B) how people throw food away.
 - (C) what kinds of food people buy.
 - (D) how much money people spend on wasted food.
- 4 What can you figure out from the chart that is included with the article?
- (A) how many people eat food that is more than a day or two old
 - (B) how many people throw away food because they worry it will go bad
 - (C) how much fruit and vegetables restaurants throw out each day
 - (D) how much food American families throw away each day