Food safety
is everyone's business
at home

The importance of food safety

Each year, one in ten people fall ill from eating unsafe food. Unsafe food particularly affects the most vulnerable groups: pregnant women, children under five, elderly and people with compromised immune systems. Consumers can make a difference by preventing foodborne diseases, keeping informed and promoting food safety. By making safe and healthy dietary choices and practising safe food handling at home, you help reduce the global burden of disease and support sustainable food systems.

WHO's Five Keys to Safer Food were created by a group of international scientists to empower all consumers worldwide with a simple and applicable set of actions to prevent foodborne diseases: keep clean, separate raw and cooked, cook thoroughly, keep food at safe temperatures and use safe water and raw materials. Most foodborne diseases are preventable with proper food handling. You and your family can make a difference!

What are the benefits of food safety for families?

- Improved child growth and development;
- Increased school attendance and work productivity in adult life;
- Reduced medical expenses;

- Increased work attendance and earning potential for adults and lower costs for care of sick;
- Improved uptake of nutrients from food, promoting long-term health.

How to achieve food safety at home

Keep clean. Wash your hands with soap and clean water before handling food and often while preparing food. Germs are easily transferred from hands to food during meal preparation and consumption. Food contact surfaces must be cleaned and sanitized after each use.

Separate raw and cooked. Raw meat, poultry, seafood and eggs can spread illness-causing bacteria to ready-to-eat foods. Cutting boards or utensils used with raw meats must never be re-used for ready-to-eat foods like fruits and vegetables without first thoroughly cleaning and sanitizing them. Another way to avoid cross-contamination is by using dedicated (e.g. colour coded) cutting boards for different foods.

Cook thoroughly. Check that the core temperature of the cooked dish or food reaches at least 70°C, especially meat, poultry, eggs and seafood. When you use the food thermometer, make sure you place it in the centre of the thickest part of the food. Make sure it is not touching the side of the container, and make sure the thermometer is cleaned between each use. If you don't have a thermometer, make sure the food is well cooked through colour change, tenderness or other aspects.

Keep food at safe temperatures. Bacteria that cause food poisoning multiply quickest in the temperature "danger zone" – between 5°C and 60°C. Therefore, keep food below 5°C and above 60°C. Chill food promptly and properly.

Avoid confusion and ensure freshness of food by labelling and dating stored ingredients and prepared foods. Any food item not stored in its original packaging must be labelled.

Use safe water and raw materials. Wash your fruits and vegetable with clean water before eating them.

Use clean utensils and disinfect surfaces and cleaning material. To make a sanitizing solution, mix 5 ml of household bleach in 750 ml of water. Alternatively, you can use boiling water to sanitize utensils.

Feed your curiosity and learn more about food safety every year for **World Food Safety Day** (7 June). You can share insights and help others discover ways to keep their food safe.