



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations



World Health
Organization



Food safety is everyone's business in workplaces

The importance of food safety

One in ten people worldwide fall ill from eating contaminated food each year. Vulnerable groups, such as the elderly, children under five and poor populations, are the most exposed and at greatest risk of foodborne disease. Unsafe food not only adversely affects people's health and well-being, it also has negative economic consequences for individuals and businesses. Unsafe food costs low- and middle-income countries USD 110 billion each year in productivity and medical expenses.

Unsafe food decreases work attendance and earning potential; healthy people can be more productive. Whether in a cafeteria setting or prepared at home, safe food is crucial for everyone who eats in the workplace. When food safety is made a priority, employees are healthier and can achieve their potential.



What are the benefits of food safety?

Reduced absenteeism from work;

Higher earning potential;

Reduced strain on health care systems (everyone spends less on medical expenses).

How to improve food safety

AS A BUSINESS OWNER/EMPLOYER

Ensure that all food safety regulations and relevant standard operating procedures are observed in food halls and canteens, kitchens and eating areas, including adequate training for food handlers.

Include food safety education in wellness policies and consider including food safety education training as part of professional development.

Provide refrigeration and re-heating facilities to ensure workers can keep cold foods cold (below 5°C) and reheat foods to a temperature that ensures the food is safe (70°C for at least two minutes). Microorganisms can multiply very quickly in perishable foods kept at room temperature.

Promote the use of [WHO's Five Keys to Safer Food](#) among employees.

Set up spaces to safely wash raw fruits, vegetables and utensils; provide hand sanitizer.

AS AN EMPLOYEE PROTECT YOUR HEALTH BY

Washing fruits and vegetables with clean water, especially if eaten raw.

Washing your hands with soap and clean water and dry with a clean cloth before handling food.

Washing with clean water and sanitizing all surfaces and equipment (cutting boards, dishes, utensils and countertops) used in food preparation. 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.

For World Food Safety Day (7 June), invite a guest speaker or a business owner with a story to tell about the risks associated with unsafe food or benefits of safe food to help create and maintain a food safety culture in the workplace.