

AT A GLANCE

Infographic

WORLD FOOD SAFETY DAY: HOW TO HANDLE FOOD SAFELY



Access to safe and nutritious food is key to sustaining life and promoting good health. The fifth **World Food Safety Day** will be celebrated on 7 June 2023, to draw attention to the need to prevent, detect and manage foodborne risks, and to inspire action in this regard.

The globalisation of the food trade, a growing world population, climate change and rapidly changing food systems all have an impact on food safety. World Health Organization (WHO) **data** reveal that unsafe food containing harmful bacteria, viruses, parasites or chemical substances can cause more than 200 different diseases, ranging from diarrhoea to cancer. Around the world, an estimated 600 million people fall ill after eating contaminated food each year. This leads to 420 000 deaths and the loss of 33 million healthy life years (the number of years that a person is expected to continue to live in a healthy condition).

To prevent foodborne diseases and empower consumers worldwide to make healthier choices, the WHO has issued a set of **key recommendations** on safer food, formulated by a group of international scientists.

In the EU, the **European Food Safety Authority** (EFSA) is tasked with providing impartial scientific advice and communicating on risks associated with the food chain. Together with national food safety agencies, EFSA has been building a growing food-safety knowledge ecosystem, ensuring that safe food remains the basis for healthy diets and sustainable food systems.

Below are several basic rules to follow as regards food preparation and eating.



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



Separate raw and cooked food. 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, such as fruits and vegetables,

without first thoroughly cleaning and sanitising 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 – especially meat, poultry, eggs and seafood – reaches at least 70°C. To get an accurate reading, place a food thermometer in the thickest part of the food. Make sure it does not touch the side of the container and clean it between uses.

If you do not have a thermometer, signs, such as colour

change and tenderness, will tell you whether your food is cooked thoroughly.



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



Ensure freshness of stored food by labelling. Any food item not stored in its original packaging should be labelled and dated.



Use safe water and fresh produce. Wash fruit and vegetables before eating them.



Use clean utensils and disinfect surfaces. To make a sanitising solution: mix 5 ml of household bleach in 750 ml of water, or simply use boiling water.