

Five keys to safer food

Keep clean

- Wash your hands before handling food and often during food preparation
- Wash your hands after going to the toilet
- Wash and sanitize all surfaces and equipment used for food preparation
- Protect kitchen areas and food from insects, pests and other animals

Separate raw and cooked

- Separate raw meat, poultry and seafood from other foods
- Use separate equipment and utensils such as knives and cutting boards for handling raw foods
- Store food in containers to avoid contact between raw and prepared foods

Cook thoroughly

- Cook food thoroughly, especially meat, poultry, eggs and seafood
- Bring foods like soups and stews to boiling to make sure that they have reached 70°C. For meat and poultry, make sure that juices are clear, not pink. Ideally, use a thermometer
- Reheat cooked food thoroughly

Keep food at safe temperatures

- Do not leave cooked food at room temperature for more than 2 hours
- Refrigerate promptly all cooked and perishable food (preferably below 5°C)
- Keep cooked food piping hot (more than 60°C) prior to serving
- Do not store food too long even in the refrigerator
- Do not thaw frozen food at room temperature

Use safe water and raw materials

- Use safe water or treat it to make it safe
- Select fresh and wholesome foods
- Choose foods processed for safety, such as pasteurized milk
- Wash fruits and vegetables, especially if eaten raw
- Do not use food beyond its expiry date



Prevention of Foodborne Disease: The Five Keys to Safer Food

There is a growing demand for food safety information at the international, national and local level. Working with WHO's network of regional and national offices and partner organizations, the Five Keys messages can be successfully disseminated all over the world. WHO encourages governments, industry and consumer organizations to disseminate this important food hygiene message.



To learn more about the Five Keys and potential collaborations, contact:

Françoise Fontannaz

Department of Food Safety, Zoonoses and Foodborne Diseases

E.mail: fontannazf@who.int



World Health Organization

Avenue Appia 20 - 1211 Geneva 27 - Switzerland



World Health Organization

Each day thousands of people die from preventable foodborne disease

Foodborne disease

- Is a problem in both developing and developed countries
- Is a strain on health care systems
- Severely affects infants, young children, elderly and the sick
- Creates a vicious cycle of diarrhoea and malnutrition
- Hurts the national economy and development, and international trade

Food can become contaminated with dangerous microorganisms at any point before consumption.

Following simple food hygiene steps can prevent most foodborne diseases.



Following the Five Keys not only prevents illness from eating contaminated food but also contributes to the prevention of diseases caused by handling infected animals, such as avian flu.

Knowledge is the key to health

WHO actively promotes the adaptation of global health messages to the local level. Educational projects are being implemented at the community level thanks to a contribution from the United Kingdom (DFID).

The Five Keys poster has been translated into more than 30 languages. WHO has also developed a Five Keys training manual with tips on how to adapt the training program for different target groups (food handlers, consumers, school children, women).

Proper food handling is key to foodborne disease prevention

WHO in action

WHO has developed a global food hygiene message with five key steps that promote health. The message explains safe food handling and preparation practices.



The poster is available in a variety of foreign languages in electronic format at: <http://www.who.int/foodsafety/consumer/en>