Food Safety Priorities for Improving Public Health

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The World Health Organization is the directing and coordinating authority on international health within the United Nations’ system.
>7000 people working in 150 country offices, in 6 regional offices and at headquarters in Geneva
To lower the burden of foodborne disease, thereby strengthening health security and ensuring sustainable development of Member States
Presentation Outline

- Food Safety in an Evolving World
- Food Safety as a Public Health Priority
- Actions for Policy Makers, Food Handlers and Consumers
- WHO Response
Food Safety in an Evolving World
Globalization

Internationally traded food

Cross-border food safety threats
Consumer Demands

Internationally traded food

Increasingly complex food chain
Food Safety in an Evolving World

International Standards and regulations

Obligations for industry and government to adapt
Changing dietary patterns

Availability of convenience foods

Expectations for food handlers
Growing global population

Intensification of agriculture and animal production

Greater opportunities for mismanagement of pesticides, growth promoters and antibiotics
New food production Technologies

Resource requirements for safety assessments
Advancements in detection methods (e.g. WGS)

Potential to pinpoint sources and locations of contamination
Climate Change

Impact on crop and animal production

Rising temperatures could introduce hygiene risks during storage and distribution
No food safety system is 100% protected against foodborne hazards.

We must work together at all points of the food chain from production to consumption and across national borders to ensure a safe food supply around the globe.
Food Safety as a Public Health Priority
The burden of foodborne diseases is substantial

Every year foodborne diseases cause:

almost

in 10 people to fall ill | 33 million healthy life years lost

Foodborne diseases can be deadly, especially in children <5

420,000 deaths

Children account for 1/3 of deaths from foodborne diseases

FOODBORNE DISEASES ARE PREVENTABLE. EVERYONE HAS A ROLE TO PLAY.
Foodborne diseases in the WHO South-East Asia Region

Every year

>150 million people fall ill

>175,000 die

including

60 million children <5 fall ill

50,000 die

Diarrhoeal diseases are responsible for majority of deaths. Key causes:

- Norovirus
- Non-typhoidal Salmonella
- Pathogenic E. coli

Region has

>1/2 the people globally who are infected and die from typhoid fever or hepatitis A

Foodborne diseases are preventable. Everyone has a role to play.
Policy Maker Actions for Food Safety
Policy Makers can:

Build and maintain adequate **food systems and infrastructures** to respond to and manage food safety risks along the entire food chain, including during emergencies.
Foster multi-sectoral collaboration among public health, animal health, agriculture and other sectors for better communication and joint action.
Policy Makers can:

Integrate food safety into broader food policies and programmes (e.g. nutrition and food security; Sustainable Development Goals)
Policy Makers can:

Think **globally** and act **locally** to ensure the food produce domestically be **safe** internationally.
Food Handler and Consumer Actions for Food Safety
Food Handlers and Consumers can:

**Know** the food they use
(read labels on food package, make an informed choice, become familiar with common food hazards, know food origin)
Food Handlers and Consumers can:

Handle and prepare food safely, practicing the WHO Five Keys to Safer Food at home, or when selling at restaurants or at local markets.
Food Handlers and Consumers can:

Grow fruits and vegetables using the WHO Five Keys to Growing Safer Fruits and Vegetables to decrease microbial contamination.
WHO helps Member States build capacity to prevent, detect and manage foodborne risks by:

Independent scientific assessments on microbiological and chemical hazards that form the basis for international food standards, guidelines and recommendations to ensure food is safe wherever it originates.
WHO helps Member States build capacity to prevent, detect and manage foodborne risks by:

Assessing the safety of new technologies used in food production, such as genetic modification and nanotechnology.
WHO helps Member States build capacity to prevent, detect and manage foodborne risks by:

Helping improve national food systems and legal frameworks, and implement adequate infrastructure to manage food safety emergencies.
WHO helps Member States build capacity to prevent, detect and manage foodborne risks by:

Promoting safe food handling through systematic disease prevention and awareness programmes, through the WHO Five Keys to Safer Food message and training materials.
Advocating for food safety as an important component of health security and for integrating food safety into national policies and programmes in line with the International Health Regulations (IHR - 2005)
Protecting Consumers: A Shared Responsibility
Everyone has a role to play to ensure food safety!
Thank You

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