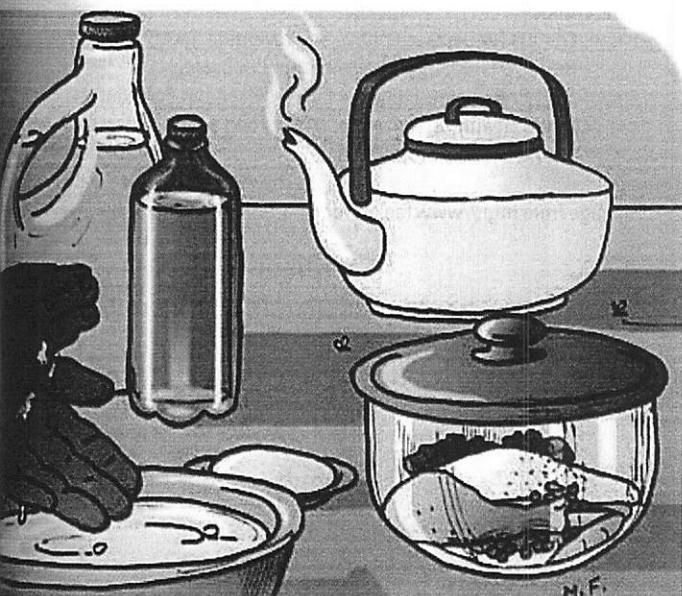


# Food Safety



Food safety is the assurance/guarantee that food will not cause harm to consumers when it is prepared and/or eaten according to its intended use.

## Food and Water-borne Diseases

These constitute a group of illnesses caused by any infectious (bacteria, viruses, and parasites) and non-infectious agents (chemical, animal and plant toxins)

## Common Causes of Food and Water-borne Diseases

- Unsafe sources of drinking water
- Improper disposal of human waste
- Unhygienic practices, like spitting anywhere, blowing or picking the nose
- Unsafe food handling and preparation practices (i.e., street-vended food)

## Five Keys to Safer Food (WHO, 2011)

### 1. *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.

### 2. *Separate raw from cooked food.*

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

### 3. *Cook food thoroughly.*

- Cook food thoroughly, especially meat, poultry, eggs, and seafood.
- Bring food, 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.

### 4. *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.

## 5. ***Use safe water and raw materials.***

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

## **What to Do in Case of Suspected Food-borne Illnesses**

- Preserve the evidence. If a portion of the suspected food is available, wrap it securely with a “danger” label and freeze it.
- Seek treatment as necessary. If symptoms persist or are severe (i.e., bloody diarrhea, excessive nausea and vomiting, or high temperature), immediately consult a doctor.
- Report the incidence to the local health department.

## **References**

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2011) Food Safety. Retrieved from <http://www.cdc.gov/foodsafety/>
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Image from <http://www.fao.org/docrep/008/a0104e/a0104e08.h>