

Food safety is a significant public health issue

Unsafe food has been a human health problem since history was first recorded, and many food safety problems encountered today are not new. Although governments all over the world are doing their best to improve the safety of the food supply, the occurrence of foodborne disease remains a significant health issue in both developed and developing countries.

It has been estimated that each year 1.8 million people die as a result of diarrhoeal diseases and most of these cases can be attributed to contaminated food or water. Proper food preparation can prevent most foodborne diseases.

More than 200 known diseases are transmitted through food.¹

The World Health Organization (WHO) has long been aware of the need to educate food handlers about their responsibilities for food safety. In the early 1990s, WHO developed the *Ten Golden Rules for Safe Food Preparation*, which were widely translated and reproduced. However, it became obvious that something simpler and more generally applicable was needed. After nearly a year of consultation with food safety experts and risk communicators, WHO introduced the Five Keys to Safer Food poster in 2001. The Five Keys to Safer Food poster incorporates all the messages of the *Ten Golden Rules for Safe Food Preparation* under simpler headings that are more easily remembered and also provides more details on the reasoning behind the suggested measures.

The Five Keys to Safer Food Poster

The core messages of the Five Keys to Safer Food are: (1) keep clean; (2) separate raw and cooked; (3) cook thoroughly; (4) keep food at safe temperatures; and (5) use safe water and raw materials. The poster has been translated into more than 40 languages and is being used to spread WHO's food hygiene message throughout the world.

¹ Mead, P.S., et al, *Food-Related Illness and Death in the United States* Emerging Infectious Diseases, Vol 5, No. 5, 1999.

The Five Keys to Safer Food Manual

The Five Keys to Safer Food Manual is divided into two sections. Section One is Background Material and Section Two is the Five Keys to Safer Food. Section Two elaborates the core food safety information provided in the WHO Five Keys to Safer Food poster and suggests how to communicate these messages. When presenting the material on the Five Keys to Safer Food it is important that this core information and rationale (i.e. why) remain the same as that presented in the poster.

The information in Section One: Background Material is not meant to be presented in its current format. The trainer has flexibility on how and when to discuss the points provided in this section. The trainer should identify points within this section that are applicable to the audience and integrate these points into the presentation of the material in section two.

In both sections information is divided into two columns. The first column contains basic information that should be presented to all audiences. The second column contains additional information which is not designed to be presented to the audience, but is designed to aid the trainer in answering questions. For some sections, the manual also presents "Considerations and suggestions for the trainer", i.e. ways to adapt the material for different audiences and different locations.

When adapting the manual to prepare a training session, the following points and questions should be considered.

- ◆ Who is the audience (e.g. school children, young adults, home food handlers, food workers)?
- ◆ Will the audience understand the level of language used?
- ◆ Have enough visual cues been incorporated to accommodate those who might not understand the language?
- ◆ Is the material of an appropriate length to capture and hold the audience's attention?
- ◆ Are instructions clear, concise and easy to follow?
- ◆ Is the material presented in an interesting way that is easy to remember and understand?
- ◆ Does the material reinforce the core information?
- ◆ Have examples of local foods been incorporated?
- ◆ Are local food practices discussed?
- ◆ Does the material reflect local facilities (i.e., running water, refrigerators, etc.)?

Although the information provided in the Five Keys to Safer Food Manual will be adapted for each audience, the concepts of the core information should remain the same as that in the WHO Five Keys to Safer Food poster.

Evaluation

All aspects of the Five Keys to Safer Food training material should be evaluated. Included in the manual are two evaluation forms: one for the organizer and/or trainer and one for the participant. The evaluation form for the organizer and/or trainer evaluates the demographics of the audience and the suitability of the adaptation process and whether or not the training session achieved its goal. The evaluation form for the participants evaluates the impact of the training session on food safety knowledge, attitude and behaviours. It is recommended that the participants complete one evaluation form before the training session and one evaluation form after the training session.

Glossary

A glossary of terms used in the manual is provided for reference.

Resources

This section contains additional information for the organizer, trainer and participants. In addition to this manual, WHO intends to develop supplemental materials targeted to different audiences including school children and women as well as other supplemental materials on different food safety topics. When developed this information will be available at the web site: www.who.int/foodsafety/consumer/5keys/en/index.html

WHO aims to improve the exchange and reapplication of practical food safety knowledge among Member States by having them exchange experiences and tested solutions. A section of the WHO Food Safety web site was designed to enable countries and partners to access the different tools produced in different parts of the world. One can actively contribute to the success of delivering the Five Keys to Safer Food public health message and prevent foodborne disease by exchanging ideas, materials and experiences on this web site.