

Importance of Food Safety and Hygiene

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Key concepts, reasons, and practical implications

1. What Is Food Safety & Hygiene?

Term	Definition
Food Safety	Practices that prevent foodborne illness and contamination from biological, chemical, and physical hazards.
Food Hygiene	Daily habits and procedures (hand washing, cleaning surfaces, proper storage) that maintain a sanitary environment for food handling.

2. Why It Matters

Reason	Impact
Protects Public Health	Reduces incidence of foodborne diseases (e.g., Salmonella, E. coli, Listeria).
Prevents Outbreaks	Limits the spread of illness in schools, workplaces, restaurants, and the community.
Economic Benefits	Saves costs associated with medical treatment, lost productivity, product recalls, and legal liabilities.
Maintains Consumer Trust	Consistent safety builds brand reputation and encourages repeat business.
Regulatory Compliance	Meets legal requirements (e.g., FDA, EFSA, Codex Alimentarius) and avoids fines or shutdowns.
Sustainability	Reduces food waste caused by spoilage or contamination.

3. Main Sources of Hazard

Hazard Type	Typical Sources	Example Controls

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Biological	Bacteria, viruses, parasites, fungi	Proper cooking temperatures, refrigeration, hygiene training
Chemical	Pesticides, cleaning agents, food additives, allergens	Correct labeling, storage segregation, safe use guidelines
Physical	Metal fragments, glass shards, stones	Equipment maintenance, sieving, visual inspections

4. Core Principles of Food Safety (HACCP-Based)

1. **Conduct a Hazard Analysis** – Identify potential hazards at each step.
 2. **Determine Critical Control Points (CCPs)** – Points where a hazard can be prevented, eliminated, or reduced.
 3. **Set Critical Limits** – Define acceptable limits (e.g., temperature $\geq 75^{\circ}\text{C}$ for 30s).
 4. **Establish Monitoring Procedures** – Routine checks to verify CCPs are under control.
 5. **Define Corrective Actions** – Steps to take when a limit is exceeded.
 6. **Implement Verification Activities** – Audits, testing, and review of records.
 7. **Maintain Documentation** – Record keeping for traceability and accountability.
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5. Everyday Hygiene Practices

Area	Best Practices
Personal Hygiene	• Wash hands with soap for 20s before/after handling food, after restroom use, and after touching waste. • Keep nails trimmed and clean. • Wear clean clothing, hair nets, or caps. • Avoid handling food when ill (especially with gastrointestinal symptoms).
Equipment & Utensils	• Clean and sanitize after each use. • Use separate cutting boards for raw meat and ready-to-eat foods. • Perform routine maintenance to prevent wear that could harbor microbes.
Surfaces	• Wipe down countertops with approved disinfectants. • Use color-coded cloths to prevent cross-contamination.
Storage	• Keep raw animal products below ready-to-eat items in refrigeration. • Maintain cold storage 4°C and hot holding 60°C. • Label and date all containers (first-in-first-out).

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Area

Best Practices

Waste

Management