World Health Day 2015: food safety

Food safety is the theme of the World Health Day 2015. Food safety is an essential component of global health and sustainable agricultural and economic development. This is especially relevant as the international community focuses on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the post-2015 development agenda. Food safety needs to be integrated into the global food security and nutrition agenda to reach the MDGs.

Food safety problems threaten the nutritional status of particularly vulnerable sub-populations, such as older adults, pregnant women and children. Foodborne illness resulting in chronic diarrhoea can negatively impact on nutritional status by reducing nutrient absorption and exacerbating nutrient deficiencies. Limited access to safe and nutritionally adequate food often forms a vicious cycle of worsening health and well-being. Beyond the direct effects on health, unsafe food imposes significant social and economic costs resulting from loss of income and reduced market access.

Ensuring food safety is a multisectoral and interdisciplinary activity in which public health sector needs to work closely together with different line ministries, such as agriculture, livestock, commerce, trade, industry, and other sectors. Such an approach (one Health) is beneficial to the effective control of zoonoses and antimicrobial resistance.

Guaranteeing the safety and quality of food supplies should be considered as important as ensuring adequate distribution of food among all people to eliminate hunger globally. Improved food safety will contribute to improved nutritional status and the reduction and prevention of noncommunicable diseases, including cancer.

To underline this, a WHO public awareness campaign will include a special focus on the preventive interventions contributing to reducing the risk of unsafe food by preparing a package of information materials for World Health Day which will address all aspects of food safety.

Related links

Dr Ala Alwan Regional Director message for World Health Day 2015 | Arabic | French

Read the press release on World Health Day 2015

Watch the video on World Health Day 2015, food safety - the global view

Watch the animated infographic on food safety | Arabic | French

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