



Food and Agriculture  
Organization of the  
United Nations



World Health  
Organization



7 June 2023 | **World Food Safety Day**



# A Guide to World Food Safety Day 2023

# Get started

Promoting food safety makes a difference. Thanks to the dedicated efforts of policymakers, food safety authorities, farmers, food business operators, cooks, scientists, teachers, students and consumers, awareness about food safety is increasing. The four observances of World Food Safety Day so far have seen growth in the number, impact and level of engagement of activities held.

Everyone can take an active role in preventing foodborne illness, and World Food Safety Day offers an opportunity to celebrate. Use this guide to spark ideas for your participation on (or around) 7 June 2023.

## Theme

# Food standards save lives

**When you eat, how do you know your food is safe?** You have probably washed your hands, cleaned your kitchenware and cooked your food to the right temperature, all good food safety practices. You have probably read food packaging labels to see what ingredients the product contains or how to cook it. And perhaps without realizing it, you have trusted everyone involved in growing, processing, packaging, distributing and preparing your food in the right way so that you can enjoy it without falling ill. Your food was safe and your trust justified because the people involved in making your food - whether close to your home or on the other side of the world - followed established food safety practices, which are transparently available in the form of standards. In other words, food standards form the bedrock of trust for all of us.

**Food standards are a way of ensuring safety and quality.** They provide guidance on hygienic food handling for farmers and processors. They define the maximum levels of additives, contaminants, residues of pesticides and veterinary drugs that can safely be consumed by all. Furthermore, standards specify how the food should be measured, packaged and transported to keep it safe. Thanks to the application of standards on things like nutrition and allergen labelling, consumers can know whether the food will be good for them.

**Most governments and organizations adopt and enforce food standards** that are based on scientific risk assessments, covering hazards that are biological, chemical and physical in nature. The standards can be developed by individual governments or organizations, or by regional or intergovernmental standard-setting bodies. One such international food safety and quality standard-setting body is the Codex Alimentarius Commission, or Codex for short. Codex is the place where representatives of 188 Member Countries and 1 Member Organization (the European Union) work together to make sure food is safe.

**Codex operates with a mandate to protect consumer health and ensure fair practices in the food trade.** Technical committees work to develop texts for standards, guidelines and codes of practice in a transparent and inclusive manner. Underpinned by scientific advice from global expert groups led by FAO and WHO, the texts are developed with input from 243 observer organizations, including industry and consumer associations.



**Used by governments and the food industry, Codex standards guide national food safety legislation and ensure best practices.** The World Trade Organization

also uses Codex standards as benchmarks. If your food comes from abroad, it has to meet these standards.

**Codex standards are at the heart of food safety.** They have been for six decades. Each year the ‘food code’ grows – new standards are introduced and existing standards are updated when new data becomes available. In 2023, as Codex turns 60, we celebrate food standards for defining the path to safe food for everyone everywhere.

**1945** Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) is founded.

**1948** World Health Organization (WHO) is constituted.

**1950** Joint FAO/WHO expert meetings begin on nutrition, food additives and related areas.

**1953** World Health Assembly warns of threat to public health from chemicals in food.

**1956** Joint FAO/WHO expert meeting begins evaluating the safety of chemical additives and their safety in food.

**1961** FAO Conference decides to establish a Codex Alimentarius Commission.

**1963** World Health Assembly approves the establishment of the Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme and the Codex Alimentarius Commission.

**1963** Codex Alimentarius Commission holds its first meeting.

**1985** UN General Assembly states that where possible governments should adopt Codex Alimentarius standards.

**1991** FAO/WHO Conference on Food Standards recognizes importance of sound science and risk assessment principles.

**1995** World Trade Organization (WTO) recognizes Codex standards as benchmarks in resolving trade disputes.

**2023** Codex Alimentarius Commission plans to hold its 46th session, marking 60 years of standard-setting.



# Ways to celebrate

- If you aim to organize an event, below are some examples to help you decide how to celebrate.
- It is important to ensure all physical events meet the local COVID-19 prevention measures.
- Gathering virtually is an alternative that also allows for participation from afar.



## MAKE A VIDEO

Document a story about a farmer, health professional, chef or food business operator. Sharing experiences can help people understand just how important food safety is.



## TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

There are numerous ways you can learn about food safety or share your knowledge either in person or online. Run a competition or a quiz.



## HOLD A SPORTS ACTIVITY

Organize a run, walk or dance to promote food safety. Fitness is a great way for people to get involved in their communities for a cause.



## USE OUR LEAFLETS

Apply and share the advice contained in the set of [FAO-WHO two-page documents](#) that focus on improving food safety in different settings.



## TRAIN STAFF

Take the opportunity to reinforce the food safety culture at work, whether you produce, serve or sell food. Celebrate your achievements.



## SHOW GOOD PRACTICES

Invite people who grow, process, sell or cook food to talk about or demonstrate what they do and why food safety is important.



## HOST A WEBINAR

Bring people together to discuss this year's theme. Follow the discussion with a question-and-answer session to provide tips to a virtual or in-person audience.



## BE CREATIVE

Compose a song, create a dance, write a poem or draw a picture. Art can inspire action and bring about lasting change.



## ENGAGE ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Raise awareness and promote actions that can help people keep their food safe. Influence your network to achieve safer food for better health.

## Slogan

# Food safety is everyone's business

No matter who you are or what you do, you play an important role in making sure food is safe to eat.

**If you work for a government**, you might be involved in ensuring that food control systems are fit for purpose, in developing international food safety and quality standards or in ensuring that government policies include standards aimed at safeguarding your nation's food supply. You might also be involved in making sure that consumers and food industry workers are aware of the rules and regulations in place, and of the dangers of neglecting food safety standards. You will probably also be involved in encouraging multisectoral collaboration within the food control system, and in promoting dialogue along the food supply chains to ensure good practices are upheld from the field to the table. You may very well be involved in showcasing how the government protects consumers through its policymaking and standard-setting activities and how it ensures access to safe food through support programmes such as school meals, food aid or publicly owned food outlets.

**If you work in a food business or food shop**, you will definitely be responsible for ensuring food is safe. Whether you define the food safety and quality standards of your organization, implement the quality and safety standards required by national authorities or communicate food safety messages to staff, food safety and consumer protection are in your hands. Communication by food businesses is key and both staff and customers benefit from knowing about and understanding how food stays safe, both at the production stage and once it has been purchased.

But **food safety is an important factor in any workplace**. Any place of work needs to ensure that staff can eat safe and healthy meals while at work. This means setting the policies to ensure safety standards are being implemented and followed, ensuring access to handwashing facilities, clean places to eat and appropriate storage facilities for food. At school or college, young people need to be taught about food safety and hygienic practices.

**We all need food that is safe**. There are things you can and must do when you buy, store, cook and eat food to make sure that food stays safe. World Food Safety Day is an opportunity to learn and do more about food safety and share the message with others.



# Key messages

## There is no food security without food safety

Food safety is an essential part of food security. Only when food is safe can it meet nutritional needs and help adults to live an active and healthy life and children to grow and develop.

## Food safety has a direct impact on health

Safe food allows for the uptake of nutrients, promotes long-term human development and achievement of several of the SDGs. Food safety is a shared responsibility, involving the whole supply chain, from producers to consumers. In this context, most foodborne disease is preventable with proper food handling and education at all levels.

## Science is key to sound food safety management

Monitoring and surveillance and other data collection efforts followed by its assessment together with scientific research ensures that we have the knowledge and information to develop the expert scientific advice needed to maintain safe food despite changes to the production environment, processing technology and consumer habits.

## Food safety impacts positively on economies and livelihoods

By ensuring their commodities meet food standards, producers and food traders gain the confidence of their market and secure their income. Unsafe food in trade can lead to export bans and destroy businesses, but governments can help protect the livelihoods of food workers by establishing a robust food control system and rigorous export controls.

## Food standards protect consumers

When food safety standards are applied consumers will be protected by the efforts that have been undertaken in making sure that the food they consume is safer. Food safety standards provide the common basis for understanding and, at the same time, the common basis for joint action to ensure that all of us can benefit from safe food.

## Food standards help producers

Implementing standards, guidelines and codes of practice along the food supply chain ensures that food is safe and nutritious when it reaches the consumer, contributing to consumer confidence in the products. Governments, producers, processors and retailers all play a part in ensuring food standards are met. The international food safety standards of the Codex Alimentarius facilitate fair practices in international trade.

## Science underpins food standards

Food standards help to ensure food is safe. They are established following expert advice from food scientists, microbiologists, veterinarians, medical doctors and toxicologists, to name a few. They advise policymakers what food production, processing, handling and preparation practices are needed to make food safe.

## Everyone is a risk manager

Everyone evaluates food safety risks as part of their daily choices. These choices are made by individuals and collectively by families, communities, businesses and governments.

# Facts and figures

**One in ten people** worldwide falls ill from contaminated food each year. It affects all countries.

**Over 200 diseases** are caused by eating food contaminated with bacteria, viruses, parasites or chemical substances such as heavy metals.

Children under 5 make up 9 percent of the population, but carry **40 percent of the foodborne disease** burden.

Food safety standards protect the lives of all, and the livelihoods of many. They establish the criteria which food should meet to **protect consumers and establish confidence** in the product.

The Codex Alimentarius Commission has been setting **international food standards for 60 years**.

**The Codex Alimentarius has 236 standards**, 84 guidelines, 56 codes of practice, 126 maximum levels for contaminants in food, and over 10 000 quantitative standards covering maximum levels for food additives and maximum residue limits for pesticides and veterinary drugs in food. (As of February 2023)

Antimicrobial resistant microbes can be transmitted through the food chain, via direct contact between animals and humans or through the environment. Each year, an estimated **5 million people die around the globe** because of infections with antimicrobial resistant microbes.

Microbial, chemical or physical **contamination of food can be reduced** or minimized through the implementation of food safety standards.

Since 2016, the **Codex Trust Fund**, a joint FAO and WHO programme to enhance participation in Codex, has supported 50 developing and transition economy countries in strengthening their institutions to participate more effectively in Codex work.

Safe and nutritious foods **benefit child growth** and development by improving intellectual and physical potential, as well as increasing school performance and work productivity in adult life.

The safety of food is affected by the health of animals, plants and the environment within which it is produced. Adopting a **holistic One Health approach** to food safety will deliver a better food safety system.

Food safety contributes to the achievement of several of the **SDGs** and is a truly cross-cutting area.

## Communication materials

Advocacy and communication materials are available in Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish for your use and distribution:

[World Food Safety Day website](#)

[World Food Safety Day Trello board](#)

[World Food Safety Day asset bank](#)

## Tell us about your event

Let us know your plans, then share photos, video links and event news. Make sure to document your activities so we can include them in the World Food Safety Day website, in the World Food Safety Day photo album, and in the World Food Safety Day 2023 report.

### For inspiration

Take a look at events, photos and stories from previous years:

[www.fao.org/world-food-safety-day](http://www.fao.org/world-food-safety-day)

# World Food Safety Day 2023

## Food standards save lives



To let us know about your event or ask a question, email us at [World-Food-Safety-Day@fao.org](mailto:World-Food-Safety-Day@fao.org) [Foodsafety@who.int](mailto:Foodsafety@who.int)

[www.fao.org/world-food-safety-day](http://www.fao.org/world-food-safety-day)

[www.who.int/world-food-safety-day](http://www.who.int/world-food-safety-day)

## #WorldFoodSafetyDay