

Investment in consumer food safety education has the potential to reduce foodborne disease and return savings of up to \$10 for each dollar invested.

Get involved in World Food Safety Day

Activities around the world for World Food Safety Day aim to inspire action to help prevent, detect and manage foodborne health risks.

The right actions along the food supply chain, from farmers to consumers, as well as good governance and regulations, are essential to food safety.

FAO and WHO have created a new guide to show how everyone can get involved. The guide includes five steps to make a sustained difference to food safety:

1. **Ensure it's safe.** Governments must ensure safe and nutritious food for all.
2. **Grow it safe.** Agriculture and food producers need to adopt good practices.
3. **Keep it safe.** Business operators must make sure food is safely transported, stored and prepared.
4. **Check it's safe.** Consumers need access to timely, clear and reliable information about the nutritional and disease risks associated with their food choices.
5. **Team up for safety.** Governments, regional economic bodies, UN organizations, development agencies, trade organizations, consumer and producer groups, academic and research institutions and private sector entities must work together on food safety issues.

Starting in 2019, every 7 June will be a time to highlight the benefits of safe food. World Food Safety Day was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in December 2018. The process was initiated in 2016 by Costa Rica through the Codex Alimentarius Commission, which is managed by FAO and WHO.

Food Safety Facts

An estimated 600 million people – almost 1 in 10 people in the world – fall ill after eating contaminated food and 420 000 die every year.

Children aged under 5 carry 40% of the foodborne disease burden, with 125 000 deaths every year.

Foodborne illnesses are caused by bacteria, viruses, parasites or chemical substances entering the body through contaminated food or water.

Foodborne diseases impede socioeconomic development by straining health care systems and harming national economies, tourism and trade.

The value of trade in food is US\$ 1.6 trillion, which is approximately 10% of total annual trade globally.

Recent estimates indicate that the impact of unsafe food costs low- and middle-income economies around US\$ 95 billion in lost productivity each year.

Improving hygiene practices in the food and agricultural sectors helps to reduce the emergence and spread of antimicrobial resistance along the food chain and in the environment.

Available from: <https://www.who.int/news-room/detail/06-06-2019-food-safety-is-everyones-business>

WHO/EUROPE STUDIES FIND BABY FOODS ARE HIGH IN SUGAR AND INAPPROPRIATELY MARKETED FOR BABIES

15 July 2019 - Two new studies from WHO/Europe show that a high proportion of baby foods are incorrectly marketed as suitable for infants under the age of 6 months, and that many of those foods contain inappropriately high levels of sugar.

WHO's long-standing recommendation states that children should be breastfed, exclusively, for the first 6 months. Its 2016 global Guidance on Ending the Inappropriate Promotion of Foods for Infants and Young Children explicitly states that commercial complementary foods should not be advertised for infants under 6 months of age.

“Good nutrition in infancy and early childhood remains key to ensuring optimal child growth and development, and to better health outcomes later in life – including the prevention of overweight, obesity and diet-related noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) – thereby making United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 3 to ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages much more achievable,” says Dr Zsuzsanna Jakab, WHO Regional Director for Europe.

Nutritional quality of products

WHO developed a draft Nutrient Profile Model (NPM) for children aged 6–36 months to guide decisions about which foods are inappropriate for promotion for this age group. This was put forward to Member States and stakeholders for consideration and further discussion.

WHO/Europe also developed a methodology for identifying commercial baby foods available in retail settings, and for collecting nutritional content data on labels as well as other information from packaging, labelling and promotion (including claims).

This methodology was used to collect data on 7955 food or drink products marketed for infants and young children from 516 stores in 4 cities in the WHO European Region (Vienna, Austria; Sofia, Bulgaria; Budapest, Hungary; and Haifa, Israel) between November 2017 and January 2018.

In all 4 cities, a substantial proportion of the products – ranging from 28% to 60% – were marketed as being suitable for infants under the age of 6 months.

Although this is permitted under European Union law, it does not pay tribute to the WHO International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes or the WHO Guidance. Both explicitly state that commercial complementary foods should not be marketed as suitable for infants under 6 months of age.

“Foods for infants and young children are expected to comply with various established nutrition and compositional recommendations. Nonetheless, there are concerns that many products may still be too high in sugars,” says Dr João Breda, Head of the WHO European Office for the Prevention and Control of Noncommunicable Diseases.

In 3 of the cities, half or more of the products provided over 30% of the calories from total sugars. Around a third of the products listed sugar, concentrated fruit juice or other sweetening agents as an ingredient. These added flavours and sugars could affect the development of children's taste preferences by increasing their liking for sweeter foods.

Although foods such as fruits and vegetables that naturally contain sugars are appropriate for infants and young children, the very high level of free sugars in puréed commercial products is also cause for concern.

The draft NPM for infants and young children was developed by following recommended WHO steps, and was informed by data from several sources, including a literature review. It refers to existing European Commission directives and Codex Alimentarius standards, and reflects the approach used for the WHO/Europe NPM for children over 36 months.

The draft NPM was validated against label information from 1328 products on the market in 3 countries in 2016–2017, and pilot-tested in 7 additional countries in 2018 with a further 1314 products.

Available from: <http://www.euro.who.int/en/media-centre/sections/press-releases/2019/whoeurope-studies-find-baby-foods-are-high-in-sugar-and-inappropriately-marketed-for-babies>