

# WORLD HEALTH DAY 2015

## FOOD SAFETY

**HOW SAFE  
IS YOUR FOOD?**



From farm to plate,  
make food safe



**CAMPAIGN TOOL KIT**



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# WORLD HEALTH DAY 2015 — FOOD SAFETY: CAMPAIGN AT A GLANCE

Every year, the World Health Organization selects a priority area of global public health concern as the theme for World Health Day, which falls on 7 April, the birthday of the Organization.

The theme for World Health Day 2015 will be Food Safety, a theme of high relevance to all people on the planet, and multiple stakeholders, including government, civil society, the private sector, and intergovernmental agencies.

Safe food underpins but is distinct from food security. Food safety is an area of public health action to protect consumers from the risks of food poisoning and foodborne diseases, acute or chronic. Unsafe food can lead to a range of health problems: diarrhoeal disease, viral disease (the first Ebola cases were linked to contaminated bush meat); reproductive and developmental problems, cancers. Food safety is thus a prerequisite for food security.

New threats to food safety are constantly emerging. Changes in food production, distribution and consumption (i.e. intensive agriculture, globalization of food trade, mass catering and street food); changes to the environment; new and emerging bacteria and toxins; antimicrobial resistance—all increase the risk that food becomes contaminated. Increases in travel and trade enhance the likelihood that contamination can spread.

The World Health Organization helps and encourages countries to prevent, detect and respond to foodborne disease outbreaks—in line with the Codex Alimentarius, a collection of international food standards, guidelines and codes of practice covering all the main foods. Recognising that food safety is a cross-cutting issue and shared



responsibility, the World Health Organization welcomes the participation of non-public health sectors (i.e. agriculture, trade and commerce, environment, standardization) in this campaign and seeks support of major international and regional agencies and organizations active in the fields of food, emergency aid, and education.

World Health Day 2015 is an opportunity to alert governments, manufacturers, retailers and the public to the importance of food safety—and the part each can play in ensuring that the food on peoples' plates is safe to eat.

## PUBLIC HEALTH CONTEXT

### Key facts

(More information: WHO Fact Sheet <http://who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs399/en/>)

- Access to sufficient amounts of safe and nutritious food is key to sustaining life and promoting good health.
- Unsafe food—containing harmful bacteria, viruses, parasites or chemical substances—causes more than 200 diseases, ranging from diarrhoea to cancers.
- Foodborne and waterborne diarrhoeal diseases kill an estimated 2 million people annually, including many children.
- Food safety, nutrition and food security are inextricably linked. Unsafe food creates a vicious cycle of disease and malnutrition, particularly affecting infants, young children, the elderly and the sick.
- Foodborne diseases impede socioeconomic development by straining health care systems, and harming national economies, tourism and trade.
- Food now crosses multiple national borders from where it is produced to where it is consumed. Good collaboration between governments, producers and consumers helps ensure food safety.

Foodborne illnesses are usually infectious or toxic in nature. They can be caused by bacteria, viruses, parasites or chemical substances entering the body through contaminated food or water.

Foodborne pathogens can cause severe diarrhoea or debilitating infections including meningitis. Chemical contamination can lead to acute poisoning or long-term diseases, such as cancer. Foodborne diseases may lead to long-lasting disability or death. Examples of unsafe food include uncooked foods of animal origin, fruits and vegetables contaminated with faeces, and shellfish containing marine biotoxins.

The main causes of foodborne illness are:

- Bacteria
- Viruses
- Parasites
- Prions
- Chemicals (naturally occurring, and man made)

# OVERALL GOAL

The campaign aims to:

- Spur governments to improve food safety through public awareness campaigns and highlight their ongoing actions in this area
- Encourage consumers to ensure the food on their plate is safe (ask questions, check labels, follow hygiene tips)

# STRATEGIC APPROACH

## **1. Disseminate core messaging aimed at the two main audiences (Member States and consumers)**

Develop messaging to answer key questions for the main audiences, including for:

- Member States and regional economic integration organisations (ministries of health, agriculture, education and trade; food safety and consumer protection agencies, etc.):
  - How safe is your national/regional food supply? Are your national food safety systems relevant and effective?
  - Do people in your country/region have accurate and up-to-date information about the most common threats to food safety?
- Consumers:
  - Do you know how to ensure the food on your plate is safe to eat?

## **2. Engage influential food-related advocates/relevant public figures**

- National/international consumer societies
- Academia and professional associations
- Nutrition/humanitarian-oriented NGOs
- Celebrities including chefs and other professionals who can act as food safety advocates

## **3. Link and create synergies with other major international and national food- and nutrition-related events**

- Follow-up to the Second International Conference on Nutrition, its Rome Declaration and Framework for Action 19-21 November 2014 (<http://www.fao.org/about/meetings/icn2/en/>)

Milano Expo 2015 “Feeding the Planet Energy for Life” from 1 May 2014 to 31 October 2015 (<http://www.expo2015.org>)



## CORE MATERIALS/ACTIVITIES

- Visuals and graphics:
  - Posters adapted to local culture (examples below under **Visuals**); infographics
- Text products:
  - WHO fact sheet on Food Safety <http://who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs399/en>
  - Lancet commentary by WHO DG on food safety and food security [http://www.who.int/foodsafety/areas\\_work/nutrition/Lancetfoodsafety\\_nov2014.pdf](http://www.who.int/foodsafety/areas_work/nutrition/Lancetfoodsafety_nov2014.pdf)
  - Food preparation advice for families issued by national authorities
  - [Codex Alimentarius<sup>1</sup>, Five Keys to Safer Food, Strategic plan for food safety including foodborne zoonoses 2013-2022](#)
- WHO Multimedia products available in February-March 2015:
  - 30 second public service announcement in English, Spanish, Chinese, Arabic, French, Russian, Portuguese
  - 3-5 min video
- Social media:
  - Campaign using #safefood hashtag linked to visuals, asking people to engage through Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, Vine, showing from their points of view/local contexts:
    - What is safe food? How do you ensure your food is safe?
    - Web users will be invited to share with WHO via social media their “own plate” that answers the above questions?
- Launch events:
  - Encourage WHO country/regional offices, local authorities and relevant stakeholders to stage events on 7 April in locations around the world.
  - Organize a “global” launch event that day involving the WHO Director-General

<sup>1</sup> A joint FAO/WHO Codex secretariat is based in Rome for the core standard-setting activities. The Codex Trust Fund, a capacity-building arm of Codex, is hosted at WHO.

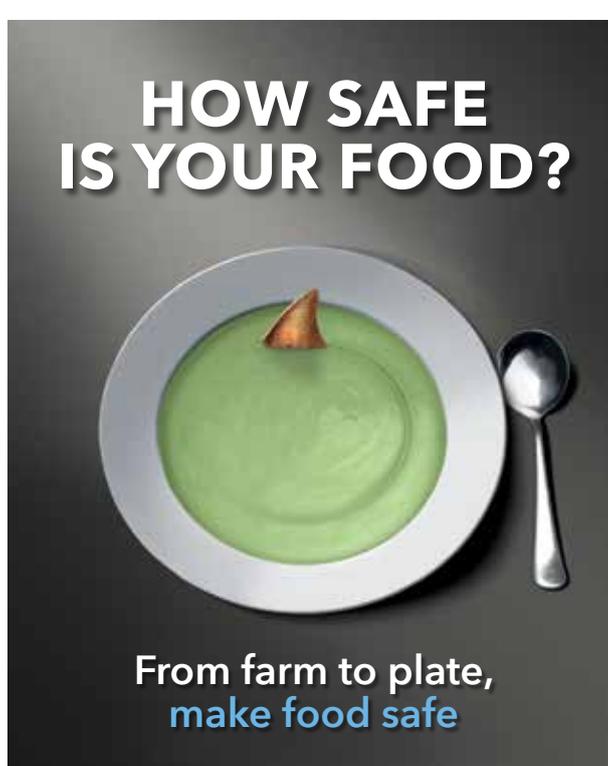
# VISUALS

The World Health Day 2015 visual treatment will aim to:

- Send a strong message about food safety— what it is, and why it is important;
- Use common food-related elements (plate/bowl containing food, bringing in the graphic element of a **question mark “?”**);
- Ask people “how safe is your food?” as a tactic to generate views/social media feedback to drive the WHD15 social media campaign.

The initial proposed (not final) concepts are attached as separate files and pasted below. These are being refined and applied to other products, including:

- Posters in 6 official languages
- Fact sheets
- Videos/Public Service Announcement



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#safefood | [www.who.int/whd/food-safety](http://www.who.int/whd/food-safety)



# WEBSITE

- An initial WHO web notice has been posted with the date, key messages, etc. of the campaign: <http://www.who.int/campaigns/world-health-day/2015/event/en/>
- This will be further developed as the campaign moves forward with the posting of new material.

# TIMELINE 2015

- February-March: launch social media drive, including promotion of multimedia material (video and public service announcement).
- 7 April: World Health Day
- 1 May - 31 Oct: [Milano EXPO 2015](#), with the theme of “Feeding the Planet, Energy for Life”, offers a prime opportunity to reinforce the messages of this campaign. During this period, there will be a number of food safety related side events organised in Italy and elsewhere.
- 6-10 July: Codex Alimentarius Commission (CICG, Geneva)
- October: Publication and launch of WHO global foodborne disease burden estimates

## MESSAGES/CALLS TO ACTION

The following messages aim to guide the development of communications products and opportunities (web, official statements, infographics, opinion editorials, etc.) with the main audiences in mind being policy makers/governments and consumers/public.

### For policy makers

- **Make safe food a top priority**
- **Integrate food safety into broader food policy**
  - *Integrate food safety into nutrition and food security policies and programmes*
- **Build trust through sound and transparent communications**
  - *Ensure transparent communication between risk assessors, risk managers and risk communicators*
  - *Promote awareness and understanding of food safety issues among the general public*
  - *Design educational campaigns targeting food handlers and the consumers*
- **Foster multi-sectoral collaboration to achieve sustainable and solid food systems**
  - *Foster closer collaboration between the various sectors involved in food (agriculture, human health, animal health, trade, tourism, etc.) to strengthen prevention, control and response to foodborne diseases*
  - *Promote the appropriate involvement of all interested parties*
  - *Build networks that are prepared to respond efficiently to food safety emergencies*

- **Think globally, act locally**
  - *Our food supply is global and food produced in one place may be sold on the other side of the world.*
  - *A strengthened food safety system in one country positively impacts the safety of food in other countries*
  - *Utilize global networks (e.g. INFOSAN) to efficiently communicate during international food safety emergencies*

## **For Consumers**

- **Inform yourself. How much do you know about your food?**
  - *Read the labels when buying and preparing food*
  - *Familiarize yourself with the dangerous microbiological and chemical agents in your region*
  - *Learn how to take care when preparing specific foods which can be dangerous if not handled properly (e.g. raw chicken, cassava, etc.)*
  - *Learn how to prepare and store food from other cultures that you are not familiar with (e.g. sushi)*
- **Handle, store and prepare food safely**
  - *Practice WHO's Five Keys to Safer Food when handling and preparing food (keep clean – separate raw and cooked food – cook thoroughly – cook food at safe temperatures – use safe water and raw materials).*
  - *Avoid overcooking when frying, grilling or baking foods as this may produce toxic chemicals.*
  - *In your kitchen, store chemical products in a safe place.*
  - *Do not re-use containers that were initially used to store chemicals to store food.*
  - *Practice safe food handling when selling food at markets.*
  - *Practice WHO's Five Keys to Growing Safer Fruits and Vegetables (practice good personal hygiene – protect fields from animal faecal contamination – use treated faecal waste – evaluate and manage risks from irrigation water – keep harvest and storage equipment clean and dry) to decrease microbial contamination when growing fruits and vegetables for your family or community*
- **Teach healthy practices to others in your community**
- **Make safe/wise choices**
  - *Take particular care in preparing food for pregnant women, children, the elderly and the sick (those with a weakened immune system)*
  - *When eating food from street vendors or buffets in hotels and restaurants, make sure that cooked food is not in contact with raw food that could contaminate it.*
  - *Make sure the food you eat is prepared and kept in good hygienic conditions (clean, cooked thoroughly, and kept at the right temperature, i.e. hot or refrigerated/on ice)*
  - *When shopping, keep raw meat, poultry, fish and shellfish away from your*

*basket or your grocery cart and use separate bags for transportation*

- *When visiting food markets, be aware that live animals can transmit a number of diseases. Avoid handling or coming into close contact with these animals.*
- *When there is any doubt about the safety of drinking water, boil or treat it before drinking.*

- **Enjoy eating food**

- *Make safe food a top priority to prevent foodborne diseases, protect the health of your family and community, and be confident about the safety of the food you eat.*
- *Eating safe, nutritious, healthy food provides everyone with the energy they need to enjoy a healthy and active lifestyle.*
- *Eating brings us together. Celebrate with safe, healthy, nutritious food.*
- *Food allows us to learn, have new experiences and appreciation for other cultures.*
- *Food, cooking, and eating play a central role in every culture.*

## HOW TO GET INVOLVED

- **What do you want to change and improve?** First thing you need to do is understand what the food safety issues are in your community, and what needs to be done. Our advice on **Pages 9 and 10 for policy makers and consumers** can help you with this thinking. Get equipped with the right information and answers. The WHO website [www.who.int](http://www.who.int) is a great place to start. Contact your local food safety authorities for more information.
- **Events:** If you want to get your community involved, schools, TV shows including cooking segments, public places (like fruit and vegetable markets, public squares) all provide platforms for informative and fun events to raise awareness about food safety.
- **Social media:** you can engage in an online discussion through Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, YouTube and other platforms, using the #safefood hashtag and share images and stories related to your safe food experience. What does food safety mean in your town and what does it “look” like? Take a photo of your plate of safe food to show us.
- **Form a campaign team:** If food safety is important to you, and if you want to use the World Health Day 2015 event as a platform to advocate on the issue, then consider forming a team of people to plan your own activities and events.
- **Partner up:** World Health Day is an opportunity to partner with other organizations to advocate for better health. Food safety is this year’s theme. Contact your local authorities, schools, WHO office, newspaper, TV and radio stations and the wide range of entities involved in the production and delivery of safe and healthy food to get the message out and raise awareness on why food safety is important.
- **Contact WHO:** If you need more information, contact WHO. Key contacts are at the back of the document. We would like to promote your events, so please let us know what you arrange and do.



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