

Acknowledgements

Basic Food Safety for Health Workers has been prepared with a view to strengthening the education and training of health professionals in food safety. The book has been prepared by Drs Martin Adams, School of Biological Sciences, University of Surrey, United Kingdom and Yasmine Motarjemi, Food Safety Programme, World Health Organization. The contribution of Mrs Ann Dale, Mrs Françoise Fontannaz, Annette Enevoldsen, Mr David Bramley, and Mr Anthony Hazzard in the preparation of the book is gratefully acknowledged.

The present text is a draft for review and field-testing. The World Health Organization welcomes the comments of health professionals and other readers and users of this document.

WHO would like to acknowledge with thanks the financial support of the Opec Fund for International Development, Vienna, Austria, in the production of this book. This book has been developed in collaboration with the WHO Task Force for Cholera Control and the Swiss Disaster Relief Unit, Berne, Switzerland.

Introduction

Foodborne diseases, especially those caused by pathogenic organisms, remain a serious problem in all countries. Diarrhoea is a feature of most of these diseases and up to 70% of all episodes of diarrhoea may result from the ingestion of contaminated food and water.

The WHO book *Foodborne diseases: a focus for health education* underlines the importance of the education of consumers and food handlers, both domestic and professional, in food safety. It urges governments to take the initiative to develop, in collaboration with industries and consumers, a comprehensive, systematic and continuous programme of health education based on modern approaches to food safety. The book also identifies the health care system, particularly the primary health care system, as one of the most important vehicles for health education in food safety.

To be able to assume their role in food safety and advise the population on safe food preparation, health workers should know about the epidemiology of the principal foodborne diseases and the sociocultural conditions that encourage them. They should also receive some training in research methodology, especially in the investigation of foodborne disease outbreaks, Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) studies, and the investigation of sociocultural characteristics of the population. Health workers should also be inspired to take action in their daily work to raise public awareness of food safety, to advise the mothers of small children or pregnant women in safe food preparation, and generally to assist the community in improving food safety.

To facilitate the training of health workers, WHO has developed a training package including this book and an accompanying training manual. The training package is intended for professionals in the

health and environmental fields, particularly trainers of primary health care workers, physicians, nurses, midwives, nutritionists, medical students, and other professionals who need a basic understanding of food safety.

This book provides an introduction to the basic knowledge that health professionals need in order to discharge their responsibilities in food safety.

The book aims to increase the knowledge of health professionals regarding:

- the nature of foodborne diseases and their health and economic consequences;
- the epidemiology of foodborne diseases;
- the role of food in the transmission of various infections and intoxications;
- the factors leading to foodborne diseases;
- the measures necessary to improve food safety.

A training manual based upon a problem-solving approach to learning accompanies the present book. It provides direction on expected learning outcomes, summaries of key information to be covered, lists of recommended references and resources required, and suggestions for training activities. It also includes transparency masters and copies of hand-outs.