

# Keeping food safe and clean

## FACT

### Dirty foods and drinks can cause illness

Germs can reach our foods and drinks via dirty hands, flies or other insects, mice and other animals, and dirty utensils.

These germs or parasites may cause food poisoning (resulting in diarrhoea and vomiting) and other sickness.

The people most sensitive to food-related sickness are young children and people who are already ill.

### Food must be properly stored and prepared because:

- raw meat can contain germs and worms that can be transferred to humans
- food that is eaten raw, such as fruits and vegetables, can become contaminated by dirty hands, unclean water or flies
- germs grow fast in food that is warm and wet
- food that is kept too long can go bad and contain toxic chemicals or germs that can cause sickness.

## ACT

### Use clean and safe water

- ❖ Get water for drinking or for washing uncooked foods from a safe source, such as water pipes, tube-wells, protected dug-wells and springs.
- ❖ If no safe source is available, filter or boil the water (rolling boil for one minute) or use chlorine tablets before drinking or using the water.
- ❖ Use clean, covered containers to collect and store water. Wash your hands before collecting water.

### Store food safely

- ❖ Buy fresh foods, such as meat or fish, on the same day you will eat them.
- ❖ Cover foods to protect them from insects, pests and dust.
- ❖ Store fresh food (especially food from animals) in a cool place (a refrigerator if available).
- ❖ Keep dry foods such as flours and legumes in a dry, cool place where they are protected from insects, rats and mice, and other pests.

- ❖ Do not store leftover foods for more than a few hours (except in a refrigerator). Always store them covered and reheat them thoroughly until hot and steaming (bring liquid food to a rolling boil).

### Prepare food in a clean and safe way

- ❖ Always wash hands before handling food.
- ❖ Keep food preparation surfaces clean. Use clean carefully washed dishes and utensils to store, serve and eat food.
- ❖ Wash vegetables and fruits with clean water. If you have no clean water, peel when possible.
- ❖ Prevent raw meat, offal, poultry and fish from touching other foods. These foods often contain dangerous germs and worms which can easily wander to other foods. Wash surfaces touched by these raw foods with hot water and soap.
- ❖ Cook meat, offal, poultry and fish well. Meat should have no red juices.
- ❖ Hard-boil eggs. Do not eat raw or cracked eggs because they can contain dangerous germs (called salmonella) that cause food poisoning.
- ❖ Boil milk unless it is from a safe source. Soured and fermented milks may be safer than fresh milk.
- ❖ Do not eat or use mouldy foods. They can make you very ill.
- ❖ Cover any wounds on hands before preparing food to avoid contaminating it.
- ❖ Do not spit near food or water.

### Use and store chemicals and pesticides carefully

Pesticides and other agricultural chemicals can seriously poison people if they get into food or water.

- ❖ Follow carefully the instructions for using chemicals.
- ❖ Never put food or water in empty containers that have been used for chemicals.
- ❖ Do not store chemicals close to food items and keep them out of children's reach.
- ❖ Wash hands after using chemicals.
- ❖ Wash all foods (e.g. vegetables and fruit) that could have been sprayed with pesticides or other chemicals.

## OTHER IMPORTANT TIPS

**PASS IT ON!** Train your children to do all these things.