FOOD SAFETY

What is food safety? Is it different from food security?

Food safety means that food will not make you sick or harm you if you store, prepare and eat it correctly. WHO

Food security means that everyone always has enough safe and nutritious food that they need that helps them to be active and healthy. FAO

How can I make sure my food is safe?
There are five things that you can do to make your food safe.
By applying the following 5 Keys to Safer Food

Key 1: Keep clean

- Keep your hands clean - wash them with clean water and soap -
  - before you handle and while you prepare food
  - before you eat
  - after you go to the toilet
  - after you handle raw meat and poultry
  - after you change a baby's nappy
  - after you blow your nose
  - after you handle rubbish
  - after you handle chemicals like insecticides and pesticides
  - after playing with pets.

- When you wash your hands -
  - wet your hands under running water
  - rub your hands together for at least 20 seconds with soap
  - rinse your hands under running water
  - dry your hands thoroughly with a clean dry towel, preferably a paper towel.

- When you wash plates and utensils -
  - wash surfaces (table tops and cutting boards) and utensils after they have been in contact with raw meat, chicken or seafood
  - wash and dry the cleaning items like dish cloths
  - pay special attention to eating, drinking and cooking utensils that touch raw food or the mouth - wash and rinse these utensils with soap and water
  - scrape extra food into a rubbish bin
  - use hot water with detergent, using a clean cloth or brush to remove left-over food and grease/fat
  - rinse utensils in clean water
  - sanitise utensils with boiling water or with a sanitising solution like bleach
  - leave dishes and cooking utensils to dry, or wipe with a clean, dry cloth.

- Pests -
  - pests are rats, mice, birds, cockroaches, flies and other insects
  - pets (dogs, cats, birds) carry microorganisms and pests (fleas, ticks) on their feet, fur and feathers
  - keep food covered or in closed containers
  - keep rubbish bins covered and remove the rubbish regularly
  - keep food preparation areas in good condition (repair cracks or holes)
  - use baits or insecticides to kill pests (take care not to contaminate food)
  - keep domestic animals away from food preparation areas.

Key 2: Separate raw and cooked food
- While shopping, keep raw meat, poultry and seafood separate from other food
- Store raw meat, seafood and poultry below cooked or ready-to-eat food in the refrigerator to avoid cross-contamination. Blood from the thawed meat, seafood and poultry may drip on the cooked or ready-to-eat food
- Store food in containers with lids to avoid contact between raw and prepared food
- Wash plates and chopping boards used for raw food. Use a clean plate or chopping board for cooked food.

Key 3: Cook food thoroughly

- Food must reach a temperature of 70 degree Celsius for it to be safe to eat. This temperature kills a higher concentration of microorganisms or germs within 30 seconds
- Cook poultry until the juices are clear and the inside is no longer pink
- Cook eggs and seafood until piping hot throughout
- Bring liquid based food such as soups and stews to a boil and continue to boil for at least one minute.

Key 4: Keep food at safe temperatures

- Cool and store leftovers immediately after use
- Prepare food in small amounts to reduce the amount of leftovers
- Leftover food should not be stored in the refrigerator for longer than three days and should not be reheated more than once
- Thaw food in the refrigerator or other cool areas.

Key 5: Use safe water and raw materials

- Safe water is treated water from the municipality and other sources such as rain or river water that is collected in clean tanks or containers. Use safe water to -
  - wash fruits and vegetables
  - add to food
  - make up drinks
  - make ice
  - clean cooking and eating utensils
  - wash hands.

- Select safe raw materials
  - select fresh and wholesome food
  - avoid food that is damaged or rotting
  - choose food that is processed for safety such as pasteurised or boiled milk or meat that is inspected and sold from an approved butchery with a Certificate of Acceptability
  - wash fruits and vegetables with safe water, especially if eaten raw
  - check the label on food for dates and other health warnings e.g Allergens, when you buy it this allows you to make an informed choice.
  - throw away smashed, swollen, bulging or air blown cans.