
Book review

Safe handling of foods

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Marcel Dekker, Inc., New York, Basel, 2000, ISBN 0-8247-0331-6, 552 pages

The number of reported foodborne diseases – one of the major causes of gastrointestinal illnesses (GI) – is increasing, and still it represents only a small fraction of the people becoming ill due to contaminated food. Apart from the acute symptoms a small percentage of foodborne disease cases may develop long-lasting sequelae, i.e. chronic diarrhoea, reactive arthritis, and these affect the quality of life and have financial consequences also for the individual as well as for the society. The morbidity and mortality from foodborne diseases are also difficult to judge, and are probably underestimated. The foodborne diseases also mean a great impact on the society - due to human illness, in some cases death, the health care and public health system, because of the recall and destruction of food, loss of sales to the food industry the economy are under constraints. Because of drastic changes in the way of life (increase in travelling, importing exotic foods, increasing number of people being more vulnerable to foodborne diseases, changing in food processing and packaging technologies, globalisation of food supply etc.) as well as in the environment (antibiotic resistance, global warming, “emerging pathogens etc.), there is a great likelihood for the increase in the incidence of foodborne diseases.

The common effort of food scientists, authorities and food producers is to lower the incidence of foodborne diseases. The production of safe foods is alone not enough, the safe handling is equally important. The personnel producing and handling different food items should be aware of the meaning of safety, of what to do to produce safe food and of handling foods safely in order to reduce the likelihood of foodborne diseases. The consumers also hold responsibility in this context. Since the “absence of any risk” is unattainable, every tool, scientific and administrative (HACCP system, risk analysis) should be used to minimise the risk of occurrence of pathogens in food and food contact areas.

The book covers all type of foods from farm to fork, considering the processing technologies and handling, and discusses the risk factors from all aspects and investigates how to overtake them.

The book consists of the following chapters: 1. Safe handling of raw meat and poultry products; 2. Safe handling of dairy and egg products; 3. Safe handling of fruits and vegetables; 4. Safe handling of seafood; 5. Safe handling of foods for high risk individuals; 6. Safe food handling in airline catering; 7. Food safety in catering establishments; 8. Safe preparation of foods at the foodservice and retail level: restaurants, take-out food, churches, clubs, vending machines, universities, colleges, food stores, and delicatessens; 9. Food safety in institutions: health care institutions, schools, and correctional facilities; 10. Food safety in the home; 11.

Canned food safety; 12. Safe handling of ethnic foods; 13. Food safety information and advice in developing countries; 14. Food safety information for those in recreational activities or hazardous occupations or situations; 15. Food safety information and advice for travellers; 16. The microbiological safety of bottled waters; 17. The use of internet for food safety information and education.

Each chapter is written by experts of the given field. The content meets the requirements of scientists, food technologists, food producers, handlers and traders, university students, and those of anyone who wants to know what lies behind the expression "safe handling of food". There is an up-to-date list of references at the end of each chapter. An index at the end of the book helps in finding items of interest fast. The last chapter gives useful internet addresses and web-sites to catch up with the latest information.

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