Key foodborne diseases and hazards

**Bacteria:**
- *Listeria* can result in blood poisoning and meningitis, and is usually spread by consuming contaminated raw vegetables, ready-to-eat meals, processed meats, smoked fish or soft cheeses.
- *Brucella*, commonly from unpasteurized milk or cheese of infected goats or sheep, can cause fever, muscle pain or more severe arthritis, chronic fatigue, neurologic symptoms and depression.
- *Cholera* can be caused by consuming food contaminated with *Vibrio cholerae*. It causes watery diarrhoea that can be fatal within hours if left untreated.

**Virus:**
- *Hepatitis A* is a liver disease caused by the hepatitis A virus, transmitted through food contaminated by the faeces of an infected person. It causes jaundice, nausea, anorexia, fever, malaise and abdominal pain.

**Parasites:**
- *Toxoplasmosis*, caused by *Toxoplasma gondii*, spread through undercooked or raw meat and fresh produce, can result in impaired vision and neurological conditions.
- *Pork tapeworm* (*Taenia solium*) can cause cysts to develop in the brain (cysticercosis), which is the most frequent preventable cause of epilepsy worldwide.
- *Echinococcus tapeworms* can infect humans through food contaminated with dog or fox faeces. They can cause tumours to form in the liver, lungs and brain.
- *Chinese liver fluke* (*Clonorchis sinensis*) commonly contracted through raw and incorrectly processed or cooked fish, can cause bile duct inflammation and cancer.

**Chemicals and toxins:**
- *Aflatoxin* is a toxin produced by mould that grows on grain that has been stored inappropriately, and can cause liver cancer, one of the most deadly forms of cancer.
- *Cyanide* poisoning occurs when inappropriately processed or cooked cassava is consumed.

**Foodborne diseases are preventable. Everyone has a role to play.**

For more information: [www.who.int/foodsafety](http://www.who.int/foodsafety)

#SafeFood


© World Health Organization 2015. WHO/FOS/15.4