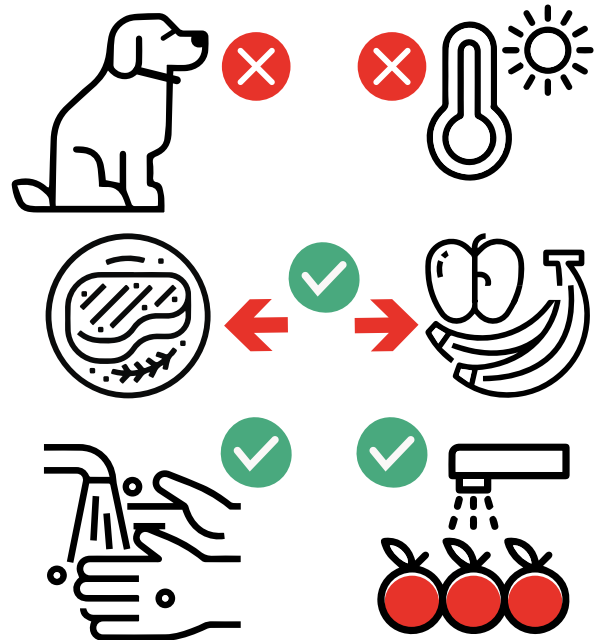


## Prevention of foodborne illnesses

From the moment food materials are obtained until they reach the table, they pass through several stages, all of which are subject to controls to guarantee food safety. Food can nonetheless be contaminated at some stage in the food chain and, as a result, spread food-borne infections and cause poisoning. Some of these can be serious for certain people, such as people with HIV whose immune system is weakened.



Food contamination can be of **biological origin** –produced by microorganisms (bacteria, viruses, parasites)–, **chemical origin** –caused by the presence of chemical substances (pollution in the sea, additives that are unauthorised or in quantities that exceed authorised limits)– or **physical origin** –caused by the presence of foreign substances in food such as feathers, plastics, wood, etc.–.

Most infections and food poisoning occur in the home and require a combination of two circumstances:

### 1) A microorganism penetrating food.

This can happen because of improper handling of food such as touching it with unwashed hands, particularly after visiting the bathroom, of coughing or sneezing on the food, or of using contaminated cloths or utensils.

### 2) The microorganism finding the right conditions of temperature, humidity and nutrients in the food for it to multiply.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) estimates that over 23 million people in Europe become sick each year from consuming contaminated food. Of these, nearly 5,000 die from complications after food poisoning. The most common diseases include campylobacteriosis, salmonellosis, listeria or Escherichia Coli (E. coli) infections.

All these diseases share the same risk factors: inadequate temperature in preserving food; improper handling; not cooking food for long enough; a lack of hygiene, and cross-contamination. Cross-contamination occurs when raw and cooked foods are handled without separating them properly or differentiating utensils.

### Five keys to food safety

Every link in the food chain has a role to play in food safety. Consumers are the last link in the food chain and are also responsible for guaranteeing food safety, ensuring proper hygiene and safe habits when buying, transporting, preserving, preparing and serving food.

Following the WHO Five Keys to Safer Food not only prevents disease caused by eating contaminated food, but also other diseases caused by handling infected animals.

#### 1. Keep clean

- Wash your hands before handling food and often during food preparation.
- Wash your hands after using the toilet.
- Wash and sanitise all surfaces and equipment used for food preparation.
- Protect kitchen areas and food from insects, pets and other animals (keep food in closed recipients).

#### 2. Separate raw and cooked

- Separate raw foods from cooked and prepared foods.
- Use separate equipment and utensils such as knives and cutting boards for handling raw foods such as fish, meat and chicken, and for pre-cooked foods.
- Store food in separate containers to prevent contact between raw and prepared foods.

#### 3. Cook, stew, roast or fry thoroughly

- When cooking, make sure foods are not raw on the inside, especially meat, poultry, eggs and fish.
- Make sure foods like soups and stews boil.
- Properly reheat all leftovers.

#### 4. Keep food at safe temperatures

- Do not leave cooked food at room temperature.
- Refrigerate all cooked and perishable food as quickly as possible (preferably below 5°C).
- Keep pre-prepared food intended for consumption hot (above 60°C).
- Do not store food for too long, even in the refrigerator. Children's food should be eaten immediately after cooking.
- Avoid defrosting food at room temperature. Defrost frozen food in the refrigerator.

#### 5. Use safe water and foods

- Use drinking water.
- Select wholesome fresh foods.
- Do not drink milk that has not been pasteurised or sterilised.
- Wash fruit and vegetables, especially if eaten raw.
- Do not eat food after its eat-by date.

**gt** grupo de trabajo sobre tratamientos del VIH  
ENTIDAD DECLARADA DE UTILIDAD PÚBLICA  
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#### Descargo de responsabilidad

La información contenida en esta ficha no pretende sustituir la recibida por el médico. Las decisiones referentes a la salud siempre deberían tomarse tras consultar con los profesionales sanitarios. La información médica puede quedar desactualizada con rapidez.

Si te surge alguna pregunta tras leer esta ficha, te aconsejamos hablar con tu médico o enfermera o llamar a gTt-VIH, al 93 458 26 41, para comprobar si existe alguna novedad relevante al respecto.

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