

CONSUMERS AWARENESS ON RISKS FROM FOOD HAZARDS DURING THE FIRST THOUSAND DAYS OF LIFE

Facts: Increasing awareness surrounding the concept of food safety

- Why food safety is important in the first 1000 days
- Consumer attention / Consumer training



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SAFFI
Safe Food for Infants
in the EU and China

FACTS:

Awareness surrounding the concept of food safety has seen a significant global increase in recent years, prompting active engagement from stakeholders responsible for regulating and overseeing this issue at all levels. Simultaneously, the expectations of consumers and advocacy groups have grown, urging governments, policymakers, industry players, researchers, and healthcare professionals to play a progressively more active and interventionist role in this realm of public health. Their call to decision-making stakeholders is to address food safety concerns and develop effective solutions and measures aimed at further safeguarding the health of food consumers. It is now widely acknowledged and accepted that food safety is not an absolute concept. Instead, it refers to a "reasonable certainty that no harm will result from intended uses under the expected consumption conditions." This definition acknowledges the practical impossibility of achieving a zero-risk approach for the majority of foods and safety contexts, including various points within food supply chains.

WHY FOOD SAFETY IS IMPORTANT IN THE FIRST THOUSAND DAYS

Recent reports have underscored the unfortunate neglect of nutrition within the realm of maternal, newborn, and child health. While there are understandable reasons for this oversight, they are not justifiable. According to UNICEF, more than 200 million children, regardless of whether they live in economically advanced or impoverished nations, fail to achieve their developmental potential in the first five years of life due to factors such as poverty, inadequate nutrition, limited access to healthcare, and insufficient psychosocial support.

Scientific evidence substantiates the critical importance of the initial 1,000 days of life for both physical and mental development. Numerous preventive and/or therapeutic interventions implemented during this crucial timeframe yield positive health outcomes in the short, medium, and long term, benefiting both individuals and communities.

The integrity and security of global food supply chains face increasing threats due to population growth and various global challenges. In many countries, the basic issue of obtaining enough food is a challenge, often exacerbated by the presence of dangerous contaminants in low-quality food. Conversely, in developed nations, the drive to provide affordable and accessible food can sometimes compromise its quality and safety.

As the saying goes, "The fate of nations is determined by what they eat", and pediatricians are at the forefront of mitigating the risks associated with food hazard. Therefore consumers should periodically and closely interact with these healthcare professionals who regularly integrate their efforts with governments and local, state, federal, and global public health institutions and agencies. This practice will allow consumers to be updated about the possible risks related to the food they provide to their infants. This collaboration ensures that infants and children have access to nutritionally sound diets and safe food.



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THE CONSUMER ATTENTION ON INFANT FOOD SAFETY DURING THE PERIOD 0-3 (FIRST THOUSAND DAYS)

A highly sensitive aspect of food safety pertains to child nutrition, specifically encompassing all-natural and commercial products related to infant nutrition during the initial one thousand days of life. This period includes the food consumed by expectant mothers during pregnancy, as well as infant formula, cereal-based products, fruit-based products, vegetable-based products, and meat-based products consumed by infants and young children within their first two years of life. The imperative for effective and continually updated methods for monitoring food safety throughout this critical first 1000-day window is increasingly recognized as crucial in safeguarding public health, particularly for ensuring the well-being of both mothers and infants⁵.

This monitoring of potential hazards in food items extends across the entire infant food supply chain, beginning with the production of primary ingredients such as fruits, vegetables, and animal-derived raw materials and continuing through all stages of consumer use, including processing, storage, and packaging.

What Role Does Nutrition Play During the First 1,000 Days of a Child's Life?



What is the First 1,000 Days?



(Nutrition for zero hunger)

THE IMPORTANCE FOR CONSUMERS TO TRAIN IN HEALTHY NUTRITION DURING THE FIRST THOUSAND DAYS OF CHILDREN

Consumers are encouraged to engage with a range of healthcare professionals, including pediatricians, pediatric surgeons, obstetricians, nurses, midwives, dieticians, and lactation consultants, to obtain vital information regarding the significance of safeguarding infants and their families during the critical phase of the mother-child relationship.

Furthermore, it is essential for consumers to educate themselves on the practice of healthy nutrition and lifestyles during the first thousand days of a child's life. Healthcare professionals, including pediatricians and primary care physicians, play a pivotal role in guiding families toward healthy eating and lifestyle choices. Hence, it is of paramount importance that consumers effectively interact with these professionals regarding the common risks inherent in the food chain, encompassing environmental contamination, process-related contamination, and concerns related to packaging, including both biological and chemical risks, as well as misuse. Consequently, it is crucial for consumers to be continually updated on ongoing monitoring programs and the development of new and more effective assessment and monitoring methods. These resources are made available and utilized by government and regulatory authorities to protect their communities.

In economically advanced regions, notably Europe, the food industry has long recognized the importance of food chain safety. Over time, it has developed robust internal monitoring mechanisms to ensure safety. However, with the expanding international market, the European Union faces heightened exposure to imports of non-EU products, often lacking adequate safety protocols in their countries of origin. There are also significant concerns about the quality assurance of various steps within the food chain in non-EU countries, including the cold chain and logistics.

To address these challenges, the EU Commission has initiated the Safe food for infants (SAFFI) project under the Horizon 2020 program. The primary objective of this EU project is to establish comprehensive monitoring systems and provide support to competent authorities and industry stakeholders in enhancing their control procedures. This initiative is particularly focused on the sensitive realm of public health, aiming to further ensure the safety of the population while enhancing the perception of adequate care. Implementing appropriate technical measures to advance the monitoring of baby food safety will also safeguard the European food industry from potential economic and reputational harm stemming from health incidents due to difficulties in adequately supervising the safety chain of imported baby food.

SAFFI: THE SINO-EUROPEAN CONSORTIUM PARTNER CENTERS



- Coordination: French National Research Institute for Agriculture, Food and Environment (INRAE),
- Five international infant food companies (Friesland Campina, HiPP, YIOTIS, Beingmate, YFFC)
 - Two food safety authority institutions (ZAIQ and ANSES)
 - Three European technological SMEs (CremeGlobal, Computomics, BDS)
 - The Union of 49 National European Societies of Pediatric (EPA-UNEPSA)
 - Seven leading European and Chinese academic institutions (WU, UNITO, IRTA, IVV; ZJU, ZAAS, JAAS)



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