





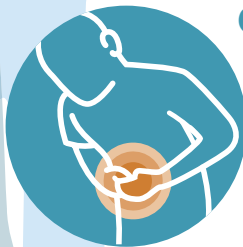
Food Safety: A Foundation for Nutritional Health

Eating food containing pathogens or harmful chemicals can lead to foodborne disease (FBD), with symptoms ranging from mild to life-threatening. Globally, FBD impacts are not distributed equally. Low- and middle-income countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia, and

Southeast Asia represent  75% of deaths, but only  41% of the global population.

The health and growth outcomes that FBD can negatively impact include:

Gut Illness



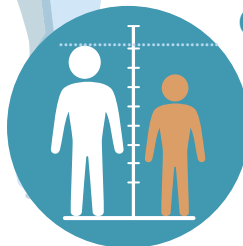
Symptoms of FBD include nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, and abdominal cramping. Because FBD can develop days or weeks after exposure and may self-resolve, people may not attribute their illness to food or seek medical care. Chronic FBD can persist even with medical attention.

Nutrient Absorption

Foodborne illness can negatively affect nutrient intake, absorption, and metabolism. Nutrition and FBD are linked, as poor nutrition can increase susceptibility to or severity of other diseases described here.



Growth and Development



Infections, including those resulting from FBD, are the greatest single cause of stunting. Some FBDs during pregnancy can cause fetal and newborn growth impairments, including miscarriage and neurologic damage.

Other Diseases

Foodborne illness can lead to other non-communicable diseases and negative health outcomes. These may include cancer, thyroid dysfunction, and metabolic diseases.



Food safety has lifelong impacts on health, with disruptions on individuals' ability to work, care for their family, and live long and healthful lives.



Further research is needed to better understand the connections between food safety, health, and impacts on certain populations — for example, how gender roles influence these linkages. Learnings can be used for integrated programs that protect vulnerable people and enable food systems to deliver safe nutritious food from farms to homes.

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Sources: [WHO, 2015](#) | [GAIN, 2020](#) | [EatSafe, 2021](#)

