The solution to preventing food borne illness essay example

Environment, Pollution

Classic English literature

Preventing food borne illnesses is a simple task and only requires some level of discipline on the part of individuals and food producing and handling corporation both private and government owned corporations. Simple hygiene practices which are often ignored should be insisted upon.

In the recent past, different dangerous infections have been affecting human beings. These infections have had high mortality rates significantly reducing the population of some areas especially in the developing countries. Some of these infections are as a result of poor living condition catalyzed by poverty and illiteracy. The illnesses commonly occur from our environment; from water sources, from food and from the general lifestyle in different communities. Most of these illnesses especially those that are caused by human daily activities can and should be prevented to reduce the mortality rate and improve the quality of life of human beings.

Among the diseases which can and should be prevented are food borne illnesses. Food borne illness is any disease that is acquired from ingesting contaminated food, chemicals and naturally occurring toxins (Marriott, Norman and Robertson 45). Ingesting food stuffs which harbors viruses, bacteria or parasites can also result to food borne illnesses. Food borne diseases also spread through beverages especially water and is also spread in beverages individuals buy from restaurants and local stores. Improper handling of these foods and beverages before, during and after preparation allows the food stuffs to harbor the infectious micro organisms (Lelieveld, 98). For instance, dangerous chemicals are usually used to manufacture pesticides and insecticides which if ingested might result to serious illnesses.

It is vital that effective mechanisms be identified and implemented to prevent food borne illnesses or food poisoning. Strict measures and policies as well as legislations should be instituted to ensure that these preventable illnesses are prevented and thus improve the health of individuals. Taking these measures is crucial considering the number of deaths recorded each year caused by food borne illnesses (Marriott, Norman and Robertson 78). According to Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), from the 128, 000 individuals who are diagnosed with various food borne illnesses, 3000 succumb to their illnesses. This is quite an alarming number and should be reduced if not being eliminated completely. It is also crucial as these illnesses drag the economy of any country including USA. For instance, about 5 to 6 Billion dollars worth of medical costs and labor hours is lost have a significant negative effect to the economy. This money could be used in other productive projects if only food borne illnesses could be prevented entirely.

Simple tasks like washing hands are extremely vital in preventing food borne illnesses (Marotz 112). It is very important to handle food stuffs with clean hands. Hands should be washed every time after visiting the toilet, whenever one handles an animal, after changing a baby’s diaper and every time before eating whether or not one handles the food or uses cutlery. Food borne pathogens like noroviruses, some types of bacteria and some parasites can be transmitted directly from one person to another or from a pet to a human being. This is why it is extremely important to thoroughly wash ones hands every time before handling any food. In washing the hands, it is important to

ensure that the water is enough and clean to effectively wash out the germs. It is also important to use anti bacterial soap though one can use any other soap.

Food should always be cooked properly and adequately. Most bacterial pathogens reproduce and thrive considerably well in low and moderate temperatures. Bacteria are killed in high temperatures. Temperatures of up to 160 Fahrenheit kill any bacteria present in food products (Karel and Lund 79). Bacteria thrive in intestinal tracts of animals that are often consumed as meat. It is very dangerous thus to consume meat that is not properly cooked. Food products such as eggs, milk, and fish should be cooked thoroughly to their right temperatures. Eggs may contain salmonella bacteria while fish may contain listeria bacteria. Toxoplasma and/or trichinella parasites are normally found in muscles of various farm animals (Lawrie and Lawrie A. 56). It is thus important to cook them to their right temperatures. The recommended temperature ranges between 145 to 165 degrees Fahrenheit. To check whether the temperature is at its optimum, it is recommended that a thermometer be used rather than relying on visual judgment. Some meats appear cooked below the required temperatures while some appear not yet cooked way above the required temperature. An example are hamburgers which sometimes appear pink above 165 degrees Fahrenheit and sometimes appear brown the color which they should be when cooked below 165 degrees Fahrenheit. Left over foods should be re heated before they are consumed (Lawrie and Lawrie A. 78). This kills any bacteria that could have been left by the initial cooking or those introduced after the food cools down.

Bacteria would certainly be killed if food stuffs are cooked at the recommended temperatures. There is though the issue of preserving nutrients that are beneficial to the human body. Most nutrients are susceptible to heat and would subsequently be destroyed if exposed to these temperatures. When foods are exposed to high temperatures, they not only lose their quality and taste, but also their nutritional value which precisely the most vital reason of consuming these foods. Beneficial bacteria are also destroyed thus completely rendering that particular food less beneficial to the body. It is important to innovate a mechanism or practice that can destroy harmful bacteria without destroying the food nutrients.

Cross contamination refers to allowing pathogens to move from one food to another (Juneja, Vijay K., Vijay and Sofos 134). Cross contamination usually occurs when cooked food is stored together with raw food. A common infection is campylobacteriosis, which is as a result of storing cooked and raw poultry together. To avoid cross examination, raw and cooked foods should be stored separately. Cooking utensils should be washed thoroughly to avoid cooked foods coming into contact with any elements of raw foods. Residues of raw food might be left on cooking utensils like knifes or cutting boards. All fruits and vegetables should be washed thoroughly before consumption to reduce the risks of infections. Fruit skins also normally may contain chemicals sprayed while still in the farm thus the need to wash them before consumption.

Bacteria require conducive environment where there is food, moisture, relative warmth and other necessary factors to grow and reproduce since they are living organisms. To prevent bacteria from thriving in food, it should

be stored in non-conducive environment for bacteria. Hot food should be stored at temperatures above 140 degrees Fahrenheit while refrigerated foods should be at temperatures below 40 degrees Fahrenheit. Food should be refrigerated not more than three hours after it has been cooked. Refrigerators should be well aerated and should be less packed. It is hygienic to cover foods to avoid contamination (Karel and Lund 80). It is vital to avoid any food or water whose source is questionable. Any leftover food that is had not been properly stored should be discarded as it may be a source of serious food poisoning.

The practices highlighted in this paper would only be effective if the public is made aware and sensitized to practice them. Active social awareness campaigns on hygiene and proper food handling should be carried out all over the country and in all public and private health and other institutions. If it were possible to have the proper hygiene practices adhered by everyone, then the society would rid itself off unnecessary health and other problems and save a lot of resources that simply go to waste.

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