HOW FOOD GETS CONTAMENATED?

CONTAMINATION CAN OCCUR AT ANY POINT ALONG THE CHAIN - DURING PRODUCTION, PROCESSING, DISTRIBUTION, OR PREPARATION OF FOOD.

EXAMPLES OF CONTAMINATION IN PRODUCTION

If a hen's reproductive organs are infected, the yolk of an egg can be contaminated in the hen before it is even laid. If the fields are sprayed with contaminated water for irrigation, fruits and vegetables can be contaminated before harvest. Fish in some tropical reefs may acquire a toxin from the smaller sea creatures they eat.

EXAMPLES OF CONTAMINATION IN PROCESSING

If contaminated water or ice is used to wash, pack, or chill fruits or vegetables, the contamination can spread to those items. During the slaughter process, germs on an animal's hide that came from the intestines can get into the final meat product. If germs contaminate surfaces used for food processing, such as a processing line or storage bins, germs can spread to foods that touch those surfaces.

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EU FOOD SAFETY
AB GIDA GÜVENLİĞİ

EXAMPLES OF CONTAMINATION IN DISTRIBUTION

If refrigerated food is left on a loading dock for long time in warm weather, it could reach temperatures that allow bacteria to grow. Fresh produce can be contaminated if it is loaded into a truck that was not cleaned after transporting animals or animal products.

EXAMPLES OF CONTAMINATION IN PREPARATION

If a food worker stays on the job while sick and does not wash his or her hands carefully after using the toilet, the food worker can spread germs by touching the food. If a cook uses a cutting board or knife to cut raw chicken and then uses the same knife or cutting board without washing it to slice tomatoes for a salad, the tomatoes can be contaminated by germs from the chicken. Contamination can occur in a refrigerator if meat juices get on items that will be eaten raw.

MISHANDLING AT MULTIPLE POINTS

Sometimes, by the time a food causes illness, it has been mishandled in several ways along the food production chain. Once contamination occurs, further mishandling, such as undercooking the food or leaving it out on the counter at an unsafe temperature, can make a foodborne illness more likely. Many germs grow quickly in food held at room temperature - a tiny number can grow to a large number in just a few hours. Reheating or boiling food after it has been left at room temperature for a long time does not always make it safe because some germs produce toxins that are not destroyed by heat.