



## **MINISTRY OF HEALTH**

### **STATE DEPARTMENT FOR PUBLIC HEALTH AND PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS**

#### **Ministry of Health Prioritizes Food Safety Amid Flood Crisis**

**Nairobi, Kenya – 6th May 2024**

The State Department for Public Health and Professional Standards is committed to safeguarding the health and well-being of all Kenyans, particularly during the ongoing floods. As floods persistently affect various regions, ensuring access to safe and nutritious food remains paramount in our efforts to protect public health.

Foodborne illnesses pose a significant threat to our communities, with diarrhoea outbreaks largely attributed to the consumption of contaminated food and water. Typhoid, dysentery, gastroenteritis, aflatoxin poisoning, brucellosis, and cholera are among the prevalent diseases plaguing our nation. These health risks underscore the critical importance of prioritizing food safety management, especially in the wake of natural disasters like floods.

Key factors contributing to foodborne illnesses include cross-contamination, unsafe food sources, inadequate cooking, improper storage, and poor personal hygiene practices. Recognizing these risks, the Ministry of Health remains vigilant in its efforts to mitigate the spread of diseases and safeguard public health.

A particular concern amidst the current flood crisis is the contamination of maize flour, cereals, and pulses with aflatoxin, exacerbated by heavy rains. Factors such as improper harvesting, drying methods, and inadequate storage significantly contribute to aflatoxin contamination, posing serious health risks to consumers.

In collaboration with our partners, the Ministry of Health is actively engaged in initiatives aimed at protecting consumers from the adverse effects of unwholesome foods. By fostering cooperation and collective action, we can ensure the safety and integrity of our food supply chain.

#### **Call to Action: Everyone Plays a Vital Role**

##### **Food Business Operators:**

- Establish and regularly update food safety management plans.
- Adhere to good hygiene practices to prevent food safety incidents.

**Consumers:**

- Use clean water for drinking and food preparation.
- Thoroughly clean and sanitize all surfaces and utensils exposed to floodwaters.
- Monitor refrigerated or frozen foods during power outages.
- Practice proper handwashing before handling food.
- Cook food thoroughly and store dry foods away from moisture.
- Refrain from consuming maize that has changed color.
- Seek immediate medical attention if experiencing symptoms of foodborne illness.

**For Immediate Assistance, Contact:**

National Public Health Emergency Operation Centre:

0729 47 14 14

0732 35 35 35

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Together, let us remain vigilant and proactive in safeguarding the health and well-being of all Kenyans. For further updates and guidance on food safety measures, visit the Ministry of Health website or contact our office directly.



Mary Muthoni Muriuki, CBS  
**PRINCIPAL SECRETARY**