

## High school: The ideal time to introduce food safety habits

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Twenty food safety and youth education experts were interviewed about why they thought it was important to impart food safety education to high school students. One key reason was the students' imminent departure from home when, often for the first time, they take on sole responsibility for their food's safety. High school is also structured better to educate students about good food handling practices compared to higher education (for example, minimum attendance requirements for all students). An added benefit is that young people equipped with food and nutrition knowledge can play a vital role in improving the health of their families.

Young adults also tend to practice risky food consumption and preparation behaviours without being aware of the repercussions. Having food safety training would enable them to make better decisions when handling food for the rest of their lives. Moreover, students often eat frozen or microwave meals, like chicken nuggets or frozen hamburgers, which have been linked to several foodborne illness outbreaks from incorrect handling or insufficient cooking.

The study concludes that although they are not traditionally defined as high-risk groups, young adults are an important audience for safe food handling education. Reaching them at the right time can have a life-long impact on their well-being when it comes to food safety.