

## **What is HACCP?**

A food safety program was developed nearly 30 years ago originally for astronauts its purpose is the prevention of hazards that could cause food-borne illnesses by applying science-based controls, from raw material to finished products.

The system is known as Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point, or HACCP

HACCP involves seven principles:

- Analyse hazards. Potential hazards associated with food and measures to control those hazards are identified. The hazard could be biological, such as a microbe; chemical, such as a toxin; or physical, such as ground glass or metal fragments.
- Identify critical control points. These are points in a food's production from its raw state through processing and shipping to consumption by the consumer at which the potential hazard can be controlled or eliminated. Examples are cooking, cooling, packaging, and metal detection.
- Establish preventive measures with critical limits for each control point. For a cooked food, for example, this might include setting the minimum cooking temperature and time required to ensure the elimination of any harmful microbes.
- Establish procedures to monitor the critical control points. Such procedures might include determining how and by whom cooking time and temperature should be monitored.
- Establish corrective actions to be taken when monitoring shows that a critical limit has not been met for example, reprocessing or disposing of food if the minimum cooking temperature is not met.
- Establish procedures to verify that the system is working properly for example, testing time and temperature recording devices to verify that a cooking unit is working properly.
- Establish effective record keeping documenting the HACCP system. This would include records of hazards and their control methods, the monitoring of safety requirements and action taken to correct potential problems. Each of these principles must be backed by sound scientific knowledge: for example, published microbiological studies on time and temperature factors for controlling food borne pathogens.

## **Advantages HACCP offers**

HACCP offers a number of advantages. Most importantly, HACCP:-

- Focuses on identifying and preventing hazards from contaminating food.
- Is based on sound science .
- Permits more efficient and effective government oversight, primarily because the record keeping allows investigators to see how well a firm is complying with food safety laws over a period rather than how well it is doing on any given day.
- Places responsibility for ensuring food safety appropriately on the food manufacturer or distributor.
- Helps food companies compete more effectively in the world market.