

Position of the American Dietetic Association: food irradiation.

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Food irradiation has been identified as a safe technology to reduce the risk of foodborne illness as part of high-quality food production, processing, handling, and preparation. Food irradiation's history of scientific research, evaluation, and testing spans more than 40 countries around the world and it has been endorsed or support by numerous national and international food and organizations and professional groups. Food irradiation utilizes a source of ionizing energy that passes through food to destroy harmful bacteria and other organism. Often referred to as "cold pasteurization," food irradiation offers negligible loss of nutrients or sensory qualities in food as it does not substantially raise the temperature of the food during processing. Food irradiation does not replace proper food production, processing, handling, or preparation, nor can it enhance the quality of or prevent contact with foodborne bacteria after irradiation. In the United States, manufacturers are required to identify irradiated food sold to consumers with an international symbol (Radura) and terminology describing the process on product labels. In addition, food irradiation facilities are thoroughly regulated and monitored for worker and environmental safety. Members of The American Dietetic Association (ADA) and other food, nutrition, and health professionals have a responsibility to educate consumers, food processors, manufacturers and retailers about the safety and application of the technology. When consumers are educated about food irradiation, many prefer irradiated products because of their increased safety. It is the position of ADA that food irradiation enhances the safety and quality of the food supply and helps protect consumers from foodborne illness. The ADA encourages the government, food manufactures, food commodity groups, and qualified food and nutrition professionals to work together to educate consumers about this additional food safety tool and make this choice available in the marketplace.

PMID: 10670403 [PubMed - indexed for MEDLINE]