

## FOOD POISONING CASES ON THE RISE: EXPERT ISSUES CRITICAL WARNINGS

The noticeable increase in food poisoning cases in Türkiye has brought hygiene practices during both production and consumption stages back into focus. Drawing attention to the risks behind the rising cases, Food Engineer Asst. Prof. Eda Şensu Demir provided important statements on the issue. Evaluating the recent surge in food poisoning incidents frequently discussed by the public, Asst. Prof. Eda Şensu Demir — Food Engineer and Head of the Food Technology Program at Istanbul Gelisim Vocational School — emphasized that both structural and individual mistakes lie at the root of the increase.

### “THE MOST IMPORTANT CAUSE OF RISING CASES IS LACK OF HYGIENE”

Regarding the reasons behind the rise in food poisoning, Asst. Prof. Şensu Demir said:

“Lack of hygiene, improper food storage conditions, and shortcomings in inspections are the main causes of the increase in cases. Especially when foods are kept for long periods in the ‘Danger Zone’ between 5°C and 63°C, bacteria multiply rapidly and reach dangerous levels in a short time.”

Highlighting the risks caused by cold chain breaks and improper cooking practices, she added, “If the internal temperature of high-risk foods such as meat, poultry, and seafood does not reach at least 75°C, pathogenic microorganisms can survive. This is among the most critical triggers of food poisoning cases.”

### “STREET FOOD SOLD OPENLY POSES SERIOUS RISKS”

Asst. Prof. Şensu Demir stated that especially during summer months, street foods sold in uncontrolled environments pose greater risks:

“In products like chicken döner, the internal temperature may not reach a safe level due to high production volume, and mayonnaise-based side dishes or sauces left out for hours create ideal conditions for pathogen growth.”

Touching on shellfish, she said:

“If products like stuffed mussels are collected from polluted waters or not stored under proper cold-chain conditions, they carry not only bacterial risks but also heavy metal risks.”

She also drew attention to high-starch foods:

“When products like rice or baked potatoes are kept in the danger temperature range, bacteria such as *Bacillus cereus*, which produce heat-resistant toxins, can multiply rapidly. These toxins can cause severe poisoning.”

“EVEN SIMPLE MISTAKES AT HOME CAN LEAD TO POISONING”

Asst. Prof. Şensu Demir noted that mistakes made by consumers at home can be just as risky as those made in food establishments:

“Leaving cooked meals at room temperature for more than two hours, thawing frozen foods on the counter, cooling leftovers too slowly, and allowing raw meat juices to come into contact with other foods in the refrigerator are among the most common mistakes.”

She added:

“Ignoring swollen or damaged packages, consuming foods sold openly under uncertain hygiene conditions, and assuming poultry is cooked without checking its internal temperature all invite food poisoning.”

“HACCP IS INDISPENSABLE IN FOOD ESTABLISHMENTS”

Addressing critical points in restaurants and cafeterias, Asst. Prof. Şensu Demir stated:

“Food safety is built on the HACCP system. Every step—from raw material acceptance and verification of cooking temperatures to rapid cooling and hot-holding procedures—must be documented.”

Emphasizing the importance of proper cooking, she added:

“For products like meat, poultry, and ground meat, the core temperature must exceed 75°C. If foods are to be served hot, they must be kept above 65°C. Anything below these limits increases microbial risk.”

## “FOOD CAN SPOIL BEFORE ITS EXPIRATION DATE; THIS IS COMPLETELY TRUE”

Correcting misconceptions about expiration dates, Asst. Prof. Demir explained:

“Shelf life is only valid under ideal storage conditions. When the cold chain is broken, a product can become dangerous within hours even if its expiration date is days away. Once a package is opened, the protective barrier is removed, so dairy products should be consumed within 3–7 days.”

Regarding swollen packages, she warned:

“Swelling indicates microbial activity or toxin formation. Consuming such a product may lead to severe consequences such as botulism.”

## “HYGIENE IS MORE FRAGILE IN SMALL BUSINESSES”

Noting that hygiene standards are more likely to be neglected in small-scale establishments, Asst. Prof. Şensu Demir stated:

“Limited space makes it difficult to separate raw and cooked foods. Inadequate ventilation, improper refrigeration, staff turnover, and lack of hygiene training place small businesses in the high-risk category.”

## “IF SYMPTOMS APPEAR, MEDICAL ATTENTION SHOULD BE SOUGHT WITHOUT DELAY”

Emphasizing the importance of taking correct steps when food poisoning is suspected, Asst. Prof. Şensu Demir said:

“The priority is to ensure that the patient quickly goes to a healthcare facility. At the same time, the suspected food sample should be isolated, recorded with its packaging information, and sent to a laboratory for analysis.”

“Access to safe food is a three-pillar responsibility”

Asst. Prof. Eda Şensu Demir concluded by stating that the system enabling safe food relies on three main stakeholders:

“Individuals must follow rules of cleanliness, separation, cooking, and cooling at home. Producers must implement HACCP fully and strengthen traceability systems. The government must increase risk-based inspections and urgently expand the employment of food engineers.”

Experts emphasize that reducing the rising food poisoning cases in Türkiye requires collective sensitivity not only in inspection processes but also during production, food service, and consumption. Increasing awareness of food safety, spreading proper practices, and implementing effective inspection models stand out as the most powerful ways to protect public health.

## **TEDX ISTANBUL GELISIM UNIVERSITY – “SUSTAINABILITY” EVENT HELD AT IGU**

Istanbul Gelisim University (IGU) hosted the first-ever TEDx Istanbul Gelisim University – Sustainability event this year, bringing together inspiring ideas and speakers who help shape the future. Held at the Mehmet Akif Ersoy Conference Hall, the event welcomed experts from various disciplines, offering a multifaceted perspective on sustainability. The main organizer of the event was Assoc. Prof. Başak Özarslan, with Asst. Prof. Can Burak Nalbantoğlu serving as moderator and Asst. Prof. Özlem Tuğçe Keleş as co-organizer. IGU Vice Rector Prof. Arda Öztürkcan and Havva Olçum contributed to the strategic planning process of the event. The academic and operational team included Assoc. Prof. Ayşe Meriç Yazıcı, Asst. Prof. Tuğba Kantarcı, Research Assistant Zehra Makar, and Research Assistant Orcan Çetinkaya. Prepared by a broad and coordinated team, the event attracted significant interest with its inspiring talks, sustainability focus, and rich content.

## **“IDEAS GROW WHEN SHARED” TOOK THE STAGE**

The program continued with an inspiring lineup of five prominent speakers.

Asiye Bahar Tabanlı, known for her social enterprise “Turkishe\_network,” which she founded to empower young women, delivered a talk titled “From Inspiration to Impact.” She emphasized that social transformation is possible through a culture of sisterhood and solidarity. Tabanlı highlighted that social sustainability goes beyond environmental policies, gaining strength through equal opportunities, supportive communities, and the pursuit of the common good.

Asst. Prof. Ahmet Aydemir, recognized for his multidisciplinary academic background in psychology, sociology, business, and sustainability, spoke under the title “Sustain-Us-Ability.” He explained that sustainability is not only an environmental issue but also a human and organizational one. Discussing missed opportunities throughout history, Aydemir emphasized that “there is still hope,” drawing attention to collective responsibility for a sustainable future.

Prof. Levent Kurnaz, internationally known for his work on climate change, evaluated the current impacts of the climate crisis in his talk titled “Should We Be Worried?” Referencing scientific data, Kurnaz explained how environmental changes affect social life and raised awareness about future risks and possible solutions.

Writer, screenwriter, and curator İzzeddin Çalışlar, in his talk “Sustainable Narrative Placements,” explored the transformation of storytelling in the digital age. He discussed the importance of sustainable narrative production and ways to create effective, long-lasting content with a minimal digital footprint.

Ufuk Emin Akengin, founder of the Onaranlar Club, took the stage with his talk “Repair, Create, Share,” focusing on production culture, upcycling, and the connection individuals build with their cities. Akengin emphasized that repairing is not only a physical act but also a mental and social process.

#### NETWORKING IN THE FOYER AREA

Following the talks, the program concluded with a closing moderation session. Participants, speakers, and the TEDx community continued exchanging ideas during a one-hour networking session held in the foyer.

The TEDx Istanbul Gelisim University – Sustainability event provided participants with a rich experience from both academic and social perspectives, once again highlighting IGU’s sustainability-oriented vision. By bringing together ideas from various disciplines under one roof, the event created a broad sphere of impact.

## **IGU LIBRARY OPEN 24 HOURS ON WEEKDAYS DURING EXAM WEEK: FREE HOT SOUP ALL NIGHT!**

Istanbul Gelisim University (IGU) continues its traditional support practices to improve students' study conditions during midterm week. The Health Sciences Library (SBK), located in IGU A Block Rectorate Building, will remain open 24 hours on weekdays throughout the exam period, while students studying late into the night are offered complimentary hot soup from 17:30 until morning.

### **24/7 WEEKDAY STUDY ENVIRONMENT**

Providing extensive resources for students during exam periods, IGU ensures that its weekday 24-hour library aligns with students' demanding study schedules. On Saturdays, the library operates between 11:00 and 17:00, and it remains closed on Sundays.

### **FREE HOT SOUP SERVICE THROUGHOUT THE NIGHT**

Students who continue their exam preparation late into the night can enjoy a warm break with the free hot soup service offered on weekdays starting at 17:30. Along with this, students benefit from IGU's quiet study areas, strong computer infrastructure, and high-speed internet access, providing uninterrupted support for all their exam needs.

### **SUPPORT FOR AN INTENSIVE STUDY PACE**

The library's extensive resources, modern technical equipment, and comfortable study spaces aim to increase productivity during the exam period. Students are able to access the academic materials they need at any time, enabling them to maintain their long study sessions without interruption.

## STUDENT-FRIENDLY PRACTICES BECOME A TRADITION

The soup service offered during exam periods has gained great appreciation among students and has become a symbol of the university's student-focused approach. University officials stated that these motivational practices will continue in the coming terms and wished success to all students entering the final exam period.

## MEANINGFUL EXHIBITION AT IGU BRINGING TOGETHER SUSTAINABILITY AND ART FOR EUROPEAN WEEK FOR WASTE REDUCTION

As part of the European Week for Waste Reduction, held between 22–30 November, Istanbul Gelisim University (IGU) Faculty of Fine Arts, in collaboration with Bakırköy Municipality's Directorate of Climate Change and Zero Waste, organized a striking exhibition aimed at raising environmental awareness.

## ELECTRONIC WASTE TRANSFORMED INTO WORKS OF ART

The exhibition, which highlighted the importance of sustainable living, was curated by IGU Vocational School of Health Services, Digital Health Systems Program Lecturer Ebru Cengiz. IGU Faculty of Fine Arts, Department of Graphic Design faculty member Assoc. Prof. Nuri Sezer and Burak Köktürk, President of the Association for Supporting Electronic Waste Recycling, also took part in the event.

The exhibition showcased several impactful works: A linocut relief created from waste materials by Kadir Döner, a 4th-year student of Graphic Design at IGU, a selection of 20 photographic works designed by Assoc. Prof. Nuri Sezer using electronic waste, a woman figure sculpted from electronic waste, a special collection featuring waste materials collected from the sea.

## MESSAGE: "A CLEAN FUTURE IS POSSIBLE"

In their speeches, Burak Köktürk, President of the Association for Supporting Electronic Waste Recycling, and Assoc. Prof. Nuri Sezer from IGU Faculty of Fine Arts emphasized the importance of raising environmental awareness. They highlighted that reducing waste, fostering habits of reuse, and expanding recycling practices are indispensable for a sustainable future. The central theme of the exhibition was encapsulated in the message: "A clean and livable future is only possible together."

## STRONG INTEREST FROM YOUNGER GENERATIONS

Following the opening remarks, participants toured the exhibition area and closely examined the artworks. Students from Florya College also attended the event, gaining significant early-age awareness on environmental consciousness and sustainability.

## IGU'S STRONG CONTRIBUTION TO ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS

With this meaningful event, Istanbul Gelisim University not only underscored the transformative power of art but also reaffirmed its role as a pioneering institution in sustainability. IGU continues to pursue its mission of creating social awareness through environmentally conscious projects.

## ISTANBUL GELISIM UNIVERSITY MEETS YOUNG PEOPLE AT THE EKET UNIVERSITY PROMOTION FAIR!

Istanbul Gelisim University (IGU) is once again taking its place with a strong and extensive team at one of the most significant events in the education world: EKET Istanbul Education and Career Days. At the fair, which will be held at the Lutfi Kırdar Convention and Exhibition Center, IGU will meet students with 65 academics from various fields of expertise. Prospective university students will have the opportunity to receive answers to all their questions during the preference period directly from expert academics.



## IGU WIND WILL BLOW AT LUTFI KIRDAR

EKET Istanbul Education and Career Days will open its doors to visitors on November 27–28 between 09:00 and 15:00. Throughout the event, Istanbul Gelisim University will provide comprehensive information to all prospective students, bringing its academic vision, international achievements, and student-centered approach directly to the field.

## 7 FACULTIES AND 2 VOCATIONAL SCHOOLS UNDER ONE ROOF

The IGU booth has been designed to fully reflect the university's academic diversity and educational strength. Academics from the following units will meet students one-on-one at the fair:

### Faculties:

- Faculty of Engineering and Architecture
- Faculty of Economics, Administrative and Social Sciences
- Faculty of Applied Sciences
- Faculty of Fine Arts
- Faculty of Dentistry
- Faculty of Health Sciences
- Faculty of Sports Sciences

### Vocational Schools:

- Istanbul Gelisim Vocational School
- Vocational School of Health Services

These faculties and vocational schools will share not only the diversity of their programs but also the academic and professional development opportunities they offer.

## EXPERT GUIDANCE FOR EVERY QUESTION, WITH A STUDENT-CENTERED APPROACH

The IGU booth will serve not only as a promotional area but also as a comprehensive consultation point offering guidance and support. Visitors will be able to receive detailed information on:

- Academic programs
- International accreditations
- Erasmus and overseas exchange opportunities
- University quality assurance processes
- Career and employment support
- Preference counseling
- Guidance services

Students will have the chance to meet one-on-one with academics and determine the most suitable academic path for their future.

## A STRONG INVITATION TO THE FUTURE FROM IGU

As one of the universities with the highest number of accredited programs in Türkiye, Istanbul Gelisim University will once again demonstrate through its participation in this fair that it is not only an educational institution but also a partner in shaping the future of young people.

We welcome all students who want to build their future with confidence to visit the IGU booth.