

**BOSOMTWE DISTRICT ASSEMBLY**  
**ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH UNIT**  
**2021 REPORT ON FOOD VENDORS AND HANDLER ORIENTATION**

The Orientation for Food Vendors in the District was held on Thursday, January 21<sup>st</sup>, 2021. The exercise started at 10:00 at Jachie.

**AREAS OF INTERESTS: FOOD SAFETY AND FOOD HYGIENE**

The orientation commenced with a short open prayer offered by Mad. Adwoa Pokua, who is a rice seller at Jachie. Mr. Paul Oduro, Chief Environmental Health Officer, began by thanking all the vendors for attending the orientation and admonished them that it would be of great significance to them. He then went on to explain to the vendors what food safety actually means.

The Environmental Health Officer made them understand that food safety is not all about keeping oneself clean like bathing, washing clothes, and selling foods in nice containers, but rather it goes beyond the few activities that have been aforementioned. He further added that food safety is used as a scientific method for describing the handling, preparation, and storage of food in a way that prevents food borne illness; the occurrence of two or more cases of a similar illness resulting from common food.

The Environmental Health Officer focused on the storage of food by saying that food must be stored in a good and hygienic condition so as to prevent rodent scrapes, smears, and droppings from getting into contact with it, thereby preventing its contamination. He also stated that cooked food must be separated from raw food to prevent cross-contamination. The vendors and handlers were told not to store cooked food in an open space so as to prevent its direct contact with the sun. And that it must be covered with a well-fitting lid to prevent flies and bacteria from getting into contact with it. Moreover, food must always be served hot and not cold to prevent diarrhoea and cholera.

The Environmental Health Officer went on to emphasise the importance of preventive measures for food safety and hygiene, saying:

1. Food vendors must always cut off their finger nails to prevent germs from getting into contact with food.
2. They must also cover their heads and wear aprons to prevent hair from getting into food and food from splitting into their dresses.
3. Before and after using the restroom and changing diapers, wash your hands with soap and water under running water.
4. To avoid food poisoning, wash vegetables such as spring onions, cabbage, cucumber, carrot, lettuce, and others under running water with vinegar or salty water.
5. Lastly, before one can prepare food and sell it to the general public, the person must be medically screened well before he or she sells it to the public.

One of the food vendors asked a question: why do they have to be screened every year while they already know their status?

Hanaan, one of the environmental health officers present, thanked the food vendors and answered the question by saying that so long as we live, move, eat, and shake hands with different people, we are likely to spread the disease; and also, there are new vendors who enter into the cooking business every year whilst others leave, necessitating the necessity to be screened every year.

Lucy concluded at 12:00 p.m. with a vote of thanks and a closing prayer.

The Environmental Health Officers present for the orientation were Mr. Oduro Paul, Miss Apiedu Hanaan and Miss Amponsah Lucy.

**CHARLES SASAH TETTEH**

**(D.E.H.O)**

