



SUMMARY

Food spoilage can be considered as any change which renders a product unacceptable for human consumption. Food spoilage is a complex event in which a combination of microbial and chemical activities interact. During spoilage the original nutritional value, texture and flavour of the food are damaged, the food becomes harmful to health and unsuitable for consumption. It is a gradual process occurring because of poor sanitation, enzymatic or chemical reactions, improper temperature controls, microbial growth or physical abuse. Microbial spoilage is the major cause of food spoilage. A food product that starts with 100 microorganisms per gram may have a shelf life of 12 days before it develops off odors, slime and spoilage. When the initial number is 5,000 per gram, the shelf life of the same foodstuff may be shortened to seven days. Enzymes help speed up or slow down chemical reactions and are a normal constituent of foods. Enzymes can be inactivated by heat, which is the reason for blanching vegetables; or they can be inactivated by cold temperatures below 40° F, which is the reason for placing vegetables under refrigeration. Vacuum packaging, over-wrapped or tray packaging, freezing, drying, canning of food products, use of antioxidants etc. are the various techniques to preserve the foods to retard the spoilage.