

2. Improper hand washing or glove use
3. Food handled by sick worker
4. Insufficient heating / reheating
5. Improper cooling of food
6. Contaminated raw ingredients/cross

Getting Assistance

For additional information about food-borne illness, contact the EH&S Public Health program.



- contamination of food
7. Insufficient temperature for hot holding of food
 8. ½ day or more food prep time
 9. Room temperature storage of food
 10. Inadequate utensil cleaning



Environmental Health & Safety

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Environmental Health and Safety

Consulting Training Service



Foodborne Illness: Prevention and Reporting



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Foodborne Illness Outbreak

The Washington State Department of Health (DOH) defines a foodborne illness outbreak as “two or more persons experiencing a similar illness after ingestion of a common food or meal **AND** the food or meal is implicated as the illness source by:

- epidemiologic evaluation OR
- laboratory evidence (identify agent in a food source) OR
- other supportive information (i.e. field investigation, ill food workers, etc.)”

Incident of Foodborne Illness

Nationwide, restaurants will provide more than 70 billion meals and snacks annually, and billions more are served at home and social events. Unfortunately, many people do not think about food safety until a food-related illness affects them or a family member.

While the food supply in the United States is one of the safest in the world, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates that 76 million people get sick, more than 325,000 are hospitalized, and more than 5,200 Americans die each year from foodborne illness.



Preventing foodborne illness and death remains a major public health challenge for home food preparation, as well as at restaurants.

Reporting Foodborne Illness

Any suspected cases of foodborne illness should be reported by the individual

(or their family/friends/coworkers etc.) directly to Environmental Health and Safety (EH&S).

If you have difficulty contacting EH&S, contact your local county health department (Whitman County, 509-332-6752 or 397-6280), or the Washington State DOH consumer hotline at 360-236-3330 or 1-800-525-0127.



Food Service Establishment Response

The Washington State DOH requires food service owners / operators to immediately contact EH&S and report any complaints or incidence of a foodborne illness. ALSO, any food items that may be suspect are to be removed from sale and refrigerated until released by the health officer.



EH&S Response

When EH&S or the health officer suspects that a food service establishment (or its employees) may be a source of a foodborne illness, EH&S and the health officer shall take appropriate actions to control transmission of the disease.

EH&S will work closely with county health departments and the Washington State DOH in all investigations of a foodborne illness. The actions can include any or all of the following:

- Secure all records that may help identify individuals who may have been exposed, or require assistance in locating these individuals
- Secure the illness history of suspected employees
- Exclude any suspected employee(s) from working in a food service establishment until the health officer determines there is no further risk
- Suspend the permit of the food service establishment until the health officer determines there is no further risk
- Restrict the work activities of any sick employee(s)
- Require medical and laboratory exams of food service establishment’s employees
- Obtain laboratory testing of any suspect foods
- Require the destruction of any suspect foods or prevent it from being served
- Prohibit food service workers with a communicable illness from handling food if the infectious agent can be transmitted via food.



Hand washing is the most effective means of reducing the spread of germs, so wash hands thoroughly several times throughout the work shift using the following procedure:



Top 10 Reasons for an Outbreak

1. Bare-hand contact with food