

The Truth About Food Safety

Many people do not think about food safety until they get food poisoning, also known as foodborne illness. Fortunately, our country's food supply is one of the safest in the world. Still, foodborne illnesses are fairly common. Each year in the U.S., foodborne illnesses afflict 76 million people, more than 300,000 of those people are hospitalized, and 5,000 people die.*

Who is at Risk?

Healthy adults normally recover from foodborne illnesses in a couple of days to a couple of weeks. Vulnerable populations are at an increased risk for complications resulting from foodborne illness. Examples of vulnerable populations are:

- Children (5 and under)
- Elderly (65 and over)
- Pregnant Women
- Immune Compromised Individuals (such as those on immune suppressing drugs and chemo-therapy patients)

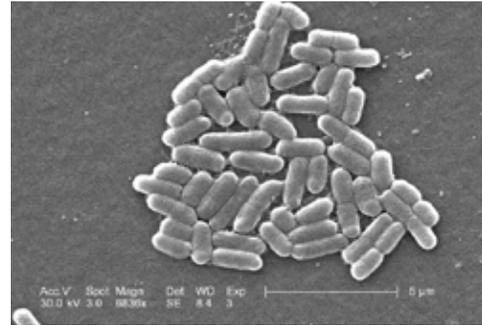


* <http://www.cdc.gov/foodsafety/>

What Causes a Foodborne Illness?

Foodborne illnesses are caused when food becomes contaminated with disease causing bacteria or viruses. When left unchecked, they reproduce quickly to levels that can cause illness in people. A person can become sick when they eat food containing disease causing bacteria, viruses or toxins.

E. coli O157:H7 magnified 6836 times



National Escherichia, Shigella, Vibrio Reference Unit at CDC

How Does Bacteria Get in Our Food in the First Place?



Food may become contaminated in a number of ways:

- Food becomes contaminated when bacteria is transferred to the food by unclean hands, dirty utensils, or when the food has come into



contact with a surface

that is dirty and unsanitary that may be harboring bacteria.

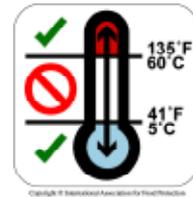
- Food becomes contaminated when it comes into contact with a utensil or surface that has raw meat juices on it.
- Raw meat contains naturally occurring bacteria and must be thoroughly cooked in order to kill all the disease causing bacteria.



Risk Factors for Foodborne Illness

According to the United States Centers for Disease Control (CDC), investigations of foodborne illness disease outbreaks often identify the following five risk factors that result in foodborne illness:

- **Improper Hot and Cold Holding of Foods**



- **Inadequate Cooking of Foods**



- **Dirty and/or Contaminated Equipment**



- **Poor Employee Health & Personal Hygiene**

- **Food From Unsafe Sources**



To prevent a foodborne illness from happening in your food facility, it is very important that you control and eliminate these risk factors. It is equally important to keep your facility clean, in good repair, and free of vermin such as rodents, cockroaches, or flies.

Potentially Hazardous Food (PHF)

Some foods require temperature control because they are capable of supporting the growth of harmful microorganisms. These foods are called potentially hazardous foods or PHFs. PHFs include food of animal origin (such as meat and dairy products), cooked fruits and vegetables, cooked starches (such as rice, potatoes, and pasta), soy products (such as tofu and soy milk), as well as raw seed sprouts, cut melons, and garlic-in-oil mixtures.

PHF does not include any of the following:

- Dry foods (with water activity of 0.85 or less)
- Acidic foods (pH at or below 4.6)
- Shell egg (intact) that is not hard boiled, but has been pasteurized.
- Food in an unopened hermetically sealed container that has been commercially processed.

If PHFs have to be removed from temperature control, they shall be returned to temperature control as soon as possible.



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