



Top 5 Foodborne Illness Risk Factors

As identified by the CDC

Did You Know...

There are 48 million people in the United States who get foodborne illnesses each year. These illnesses result in an estimated 128,000 hospitalizations and 3,000 deaths. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) have identified the top 5 factors contributing to foodborne illnesses:

1. Poor Personal Hygiene

Poor personal hygiene practices serve as the leading cause of foodborne illnesses. Food establishments must promote a culture of food safety by developing an employee illness policy, proper handwashing procedure, and a no barehand contact policy with ready to eat foods.



2. Improper Holding Temperatures

Cold foods shall maintain $\leq 41^{\circ}\text{F}$ and hot foods shall maintain $\geq 135^{\circ}\text{F}$. If foods stay in between those temperatures for any period, ensure they are time and temperature controlled and documented. Time and temperature control for safety (TCS) foods must be date marked and stored no longer than 7 days. Remember, first day of preparation or when a food package is opened, counts as day 1. When in doubt, throw it out!

3. Improper Cooking Temperatures

The Food and Drug Administration has established minimum internal cooking temperatures for foods to ensure pathogen counts are reduced to safe levels. Ensure metal stem thermometers are conveniently stored and accessible for employees to monitor final cooking temperatures.

4. Food from Unsafe Sources

All foods distributed in licensed food establishments must be obtained from approved sources that comply with applicable laws and regulations. All food shall be inspected upon delivery to ensure proper temperatures, it's condition and overall sanitation.

5. Contaminated Equipment/Cross-Contamination

Cross contamination can occur from a variety of sources, including chemical and raw foods. To prevent the spread of harmful pathogens, all equipment and utensils shall be properly cleaned and sanitized at least once every 4 hours. Ensure sanitizer solutions are monitored using their appropriate test strips. Low sanitizer concentrations will fail in effectively removing pathogens from surfaces, while high concentrations will leave a toxic residue.

Science behind the change

Eight known pathogens are estimated to account for the vast majority of domestically acquired foodborne illnesses, hospitalizations, and deaths. The table below lists the top five pathogens that cause foodborne illnesses, hospitalizations, and deaths.

Top five pathogens contributing to domestically acquired foodborne illnesses

<i>Pathogen</i>	<i>Associated Food</i>	<i>Estimated number of illnesses</i>	<i>%</i>
<u>Norovirus</u>	Any food contaminated by an infected worker via fecal oral route.	5,461,731	58
<i>Salmonella, nontyphoidal</i>	Raw or undercooked meat and poultry, seafood, eggs, raw seed sprouts, raw vegetables, raw milk & untreated juice.	1,027,561	11
<i>Clostridium perfringens</i>	Cooked meat and poultry, cooked meat and poultry products including casseroles and gravy mixtures.	965,958	10
<i>Campylobacter spp.</i>	Raw or undercooked poultry or raw milk.	845,024	9
<i>Staphylococcus aureus</i>	Time temperature control for safety foods touched by barehands after cooking and final preparation.	241,148	3
Subtotal			91

For more information, visit <https://www.cdc.gov/foodborneburden/2011-foodborne-estimates.html>.