



# REPORTING FOODBORNE ILLNESS

Local, state, and Federal government agencies share responsibility for investigating foodborne illness outbreaks. Local and state health agencies first learn about foodborne illness outbreaks through reports of individual cases from health care providers and laboratories. They begin investigating as soon as they suspect there is an outbreak.

## Reporting Foodborne Diseases Is Vital

When treating a patient with a foodborne illness, it's the physician's responsibility to report the case to the local public health department.

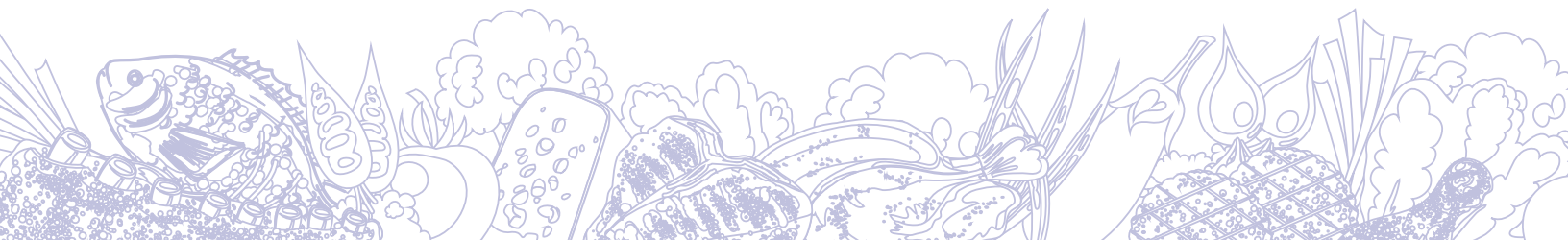
Prompt reporting of foodborne diseases speeds recognition of outbreaks, helps stem further transmission of disease, and can assist in determining whether additional regulatory controls are needed to prevent future outbreaks.

### THE ROLE OF STATE AND LOCAL HEALTH AGENCIES

State and local public health agencies play three key roles in keeping food safe and spotting outbreaks of foodborne illness:

- Inspection, assistance, and education
- Laboratory testing
- Identifying outbreaks

State health departments typically receive and analyze routine disease surveillance reports, coordinate surveillance among the local health departments, and report cases of foodborne illness to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). State and local health departments interview sick people to find out what they ate and what they did before their illness began. State agencies may also be involved in collecting information or testing samples from patients with foodborne illness (surveillance), investigation, and response.





## THE ROLE OF FEDERAL AGENCIES

CDC maintains and monitors several nationwide surveillance systems with its public health partners to track disease and quickly detect outbreaks. Once public health investigators detect a possible multistate outbreak, CDC coordinates the public health investigation to determine the source of infection. CDC serves as the public health expert in multistate outbreak investigations and works closely with the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), and state and local health officials.

The FDA becomes involved in an outbreak investigation when an FDA-regulated product is suspected as the cause of the outbreak. FDA's primary concern is to identify and eliminate the source of the outbreak, and stop the outbreak from spreading.

FDA regulates all dietary supplements, bottled water, and foods except for raw meat and poultry, certain egg products, and catfish, which are regulated by the Food Safety and Inspection Service of the USDA .

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### TAKE ACTION

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In most cases, healthcare professionals should report foodborne illnesses to their county or city health department. Please refer to your [state health department website](#) to find more information about how to contact your local health department.

## LEARN MORE

For more information on reporting foodborne illnesses, review CDC's [How to Report a Foodborne Illness](#) —Health-care Professionals.