



About The CORE Network

Advancing FDA's Fight Against Foodborne Illness Outbreaks



With CORE, FDA brought together expertise in medicine, public health and science to coordinate its efforts to find, stop and prevent foodborne illness outbreaks.

In CORE, full-time teams work on various aspects of investigations from beginning to end. They hit the ground running on new outbreaks, which speeds the response, ensures continuity, and standardizes processes.

Just weeks after CORE became operational, proof of the concept was evident in the response to a tragic outbreak of listeriosis that was linked to whole cantaloupe from Jensen Farms and had more than 30 deaths nationwide. The quick, coordinated response by CORE, state health agencies and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is widely acknowledged to have reduced the severity of the outbreak. This approach saved lives.

- Established in 2011
- 959 Incidents Evaluated
- 234 Outbreak Investigations
- 400 Public Advisories
- 94 Outbreaks Solved

Three-pronged effort: Detection, response, prevention



On the lookout

It starts with the Signals and Surveillance Team. This team's goal is early identification of an outbreak linked to an FDA-regulated food. That early identification helps FDA limit or prevent illness linked to dietary supplements, cosmetics, and foods. Team members comb through information, looking for signals that could be an early warning of an outbreak. They discuss emerging disease surveillance trends directly with CDC and, through FDA field offices, with state agencies. They also review historical data on firms, such as past inspections or sampling results, all in an effort to connect the dots. When they find an outbreak, the information moves to a Response Team.



On the hunt

Response Teams have one goal: to control and stop the outbreak. Response Teams work directly with the FDA field offices and their investigators on a response strategy. In a combined effort, the team, field offices and state and local agencies track down leads, and trace product distribution. Close coordination among the FDA, CDC, and state and local regulatory, public health and agriculture departments is crucial to stopping an outbreak.



An eye to prevention

What did we learn? How can we prevent this from happening again? These questions guide the mission of the Outbreak Evaluation and the Outbreak Analytics Teams. These teams look at all aspects of the outbreak, from ingredient sourcing to production and distribution. They conduct predictive analyses to integrate prevention into overall food safety activities. Their work may lead to new research, publications, educational outreach, or the development of new policy on ways to prevent future outbreaks.

