



Mitigating the Risk of Foodborne Illness

Background

In light of reports of foodborne disease outbreaks across the United States, like Salmonella, the public is advised to take steps to ensure food safety.

- A recent report from the US Public Interest Research Group found that recalls of food due to contamination increased 10 percent since 2013 and rose 67 percent for meat and poultry.
- Foodborne illnesses are most commonly found in produce—such as leafy greens—meat and poultry, dairy and eggs, and fish and shellfish.
- From 1998-08 leafy greens such as cabbage, lettuce, and spinach were the number one source for all foodborne outbreaks.

Who’s at Risk?

Everyone is at risk of contracting a foodborne illness. However, some individuals are at greater risk of developing a severe foodborne illness. Young children, older adults, pregnant women, and those with impaired immune systems are more likely to be infected.

Common Symptoms of Salmonella and Campylobacter

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Salmonella and Campylobacter bacteria—commonly transmitted through food—cause a combined average of 2.5 million illnesses each year in the United States. Common symptoms include:

- Abdominal cramps
- Nausea and vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Fever
- Chills



Salmonella illustration (Source: CDC)

NCR Perspective: DC, Virginia, and Maryland

From 2016-17, DC, Virginia, and Maryland had 107 reported foodborne outbreaks resulting in 2,900 illnesses, 450 hospitalizations, and four deaths.

- In 2018, Maryland and Virginia residents were infected with an antibiotic-resistant strain of *Salmonella* Infantis found in raw chicken products of varying brands and types. Investigation into the source of the infection showed individuals contracted the illness as a result of improper handling or eating raw or undercooked chicken.
- An outbreak of an antibiotic-resistant strain of *Salmonella* Reading infected individuals living in DC, Virginia, Maryland, and 35 other states in 2018. One person died, and 216 individuals reported feeling ill. In response, about 255,000 pounds of raw ground turkey products were recalled.

How to Report a Suspected Foodborne Illness

DC: To report a foodborne illness, contact the DC Health Division of Epidemiology-Disease Surveillance and Investigation at foodborne.epi@dc.gov or 202-442-9021

Virginia: Visit [Virginia Department of Health](http://www.vdh.virginia.gov)

Maryland: Contact the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene Office of Food Protection at dhmh.envhealth@maryland.gov or 410-767-8400

Steps the Public Can Take to Reduce Foodborne Illness

- Report suspected food outbreaks to your local health department;
- Follow the Food and Drug Administration and the United States Department of Agriculture [food recalls](#) and guidelines;
- Wash all food properly and prepare food on clean surfaces before consuming;
- Cook all food to the [recommended internal temperature](#) using a food thermometer;
- Refrigerate food properly;
- Wash your hands before and after preparing food;
- Thaw foods safely inside refrigeration units; and
- Keep uncooked foods—such as raw meats, vegetables, poultry, and eggs—separate from each other and from ready-to-eat foods, such as fresh fruit, cheeses, pre-cooked foods, cooked vegetables and grains, and deli-meats.

Annual Foodborne Illness Estimates



Reported Cases: 38 million

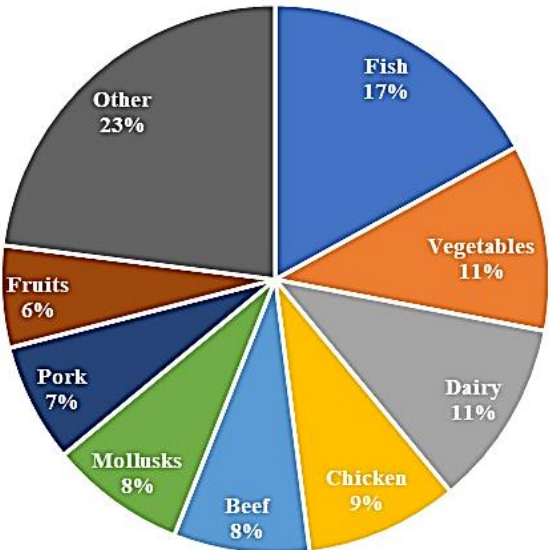


Hospitalizations: 128,000



Deaths: 3,000

Sources of Foodborne Illness 2009-16



What is Foodborne Antibiotic Resistance?

Antibiotics can be lifesaving in treating some severe foodborne illnesses; however, antibiotic resistance compromises the ability to treat these infections. When animals are given antibiotics to kill harmful bacteria carried in their intestines, antibiotic-resistant bacteria may survive. These bacteria can then spread to humans through contaminated food and the environment.

Additional Resources:

- [CDC Infographic Regarding Antibiotic Resistance](#)
- [CDC Antibiotic Resistance Questions and Answers](#)
- [World Health Organization: Antibiotic Resistance](#)