



# Foodborne Illness

## How to Prevent Foodborne Illness Events

### What is the Problem?

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that each year roughly 48 million people get sick, 128,000 are hospitalized, and 3,000 die of foodborne diseases caused by contaminated foods and beverages.<sup>1</sup> Many different disease-causing microbes, or pathogens, can contaminate foods, and therefore there are a variety of foodborne infections and associated symptoms.<sup>2</sup>



### Who is at Risk?

Anyone is at risk of foodborne illness, however, food handlers and farmers who harvest and process food and animal products have a higher risk. In addition, family and friends attending holiday gatherings also have an increased risk because prepared foods may sit out for longer periods of time.<sup>3</sup>

### Prevention Tips

Foodborne illness is a common, costly—yet preventable—public health problem. It is important to keep friends and families safe by following the tips below:

- Do not consume raw/undercooked meat or poultry product<sup>5</sup>
- Make sure shellfish are cooked thoroughly; filter-feeders are more likely to be contaminated from pathogens in the seawater<sup>6</sup>
- Rinse/cook raw vegetables before consuming as it can be a source of contamination from pesticides and manure-laden run-off from farming<sup>7</sup>
- Use separate utensils and cutting boards to prepare and handle different foods to prevent cross contamination<sup>8</sup>
- Refrigerate or freeze foods promptly so the microbial growth will cease or be halted to prevent further contamination.<sup>9</sup>
- Maintain proper hand washing technique and do not work with food product when sick<sup>4</sup>
- Keep food out of the “Danger Zone,” (40-140°F) where bacteria multiply quickly<sup>10</sup>



### **Plan of the Week (POW):**

**ALWAYS** consult your doctor if you experience symptoms related to a foodborne illness.<sup>10</sup> To prevent foodborne illness from occurring, **NEVER** cross contaminate raw or undercooked food with already prepared food items.<sup>11</sup> Consumers can promote general food safety by maintaining proper hand washing techniques, keeping food out of the “Danger Zone”, and by purchasing foods that have been processed for safety.<sup>12</sup>

### **References**

- 1, 12           Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Estimates of Foodborne Illness in the United States. <http://www.cdc.gov/foodborneburden/>. Updated 20 February 2013. Accessed 25 August 2013.
- 2-11           Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Food Safety. <http://www.cdc.gov/foodsafety/facts.html#what>. Updated 24 September 2012. Accessed 25 August 2013.

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### **NMCPHC Injury Prevention and Violence Free Living Webpage**

<http://www.med.navy.mil/sites/nmcphc/health-promotion/injury-violence-free-living/Pages/injury-violence-free-living.aspx>

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