

FOODBORNE ILLNESS AND FOOD SAFETY

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Knowledge about food safety and foodborne illness is essential to keep you and your family safe. It seems food recalls are coming out more and more often and most of us know someone that has been affected by food poisoning. You can't see, smell or taste bacteria or parasites yet they are all over in our environment. Education and awareness about safe food handling must be a priority.

The American food supply is among the safest in the world, yet the federal government estimates that there are about 48 million cases of foodborne illness annually. Each year these costly illnesses result in an estimated 128,000 hospitalizations and approximately 3,000 deaths. Foodborne illness is costly too. It is said foodborne illness costs billions of dollars each year. Fighting foodborne illness is a constant challenge and must be a focus in our homes. It is important to teach young children about proper handwashing and food safety basics, which can lead to good habits and the prevention of foodborne illness into adulthood.

These are a few of the common names of some of these foodborne illnesses: botulism, cyclophorias, E. coli, hepatitis, listeriosis, salmonellosis and staphylococcal food poisoning. Foodborne illness can have varying symptoms that range from a stomach-ache, mild discomfort to very serious, life-threatening illness. People with weakened immune systems (i.e. very young children, the elderly, cancer patients and those with HIV) are at greatest risk of serious consequences from most foodborne illnesses. Some of the signs and symptoms of food borne illness include: abdominal cramps, watery diarrhea, nausea, vomiting, difficulty swallowing, loss of appetite, loss of weight, stomach cramps, fatigue, and fever.



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Creating Healthy & Sustainable Families

USEFUL WEBSITES:

Broward County

<http://sfyl.ifas.ufl.edu/broward/family-and-consumer-sciences/>

UF/IFAS Extension

SolutionsForYourLife.com

UF/IFAS Extension Broward County Blog articles

<http://blogs.ifas.ufl.edu/browardco/>



USEFUL RESOURCES:

- ◆ UF/IFAS Extension Broward County Family Youth and Community Sciences (954) 357-5270 <http://sfyl.ifas.ufl.edu/broward/family-and-Community-sciences/>
- ◆ UF/IFAS Extension-Food Safety http://sfyl.ifas.ufl.edu/archive/families_and_consumers/food_safety/index.shtml
- ◆ UF/IFAS Extension-Disaster Preparedness http://sfyl.ifas.ufl.edu/archive/families_and_consumers/housing/disaster_prep_and_recovery.shtml
- ◆ Center for Disease Control/Food Safety <https://www.cdc.gov/foodsafety/index.html>
- ◆ FDA website at www.cfsan.fda.gov.
- ◆ Fight Bac/The Core Food Safety Practices <http://www.fightbac.org/food-safety-basics/the-core-four-practices/>
- ◆ Food Information Line at 1-888-SAFEFOOD (toll free) from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. ET. Monday through Friday

Food Safety Tips

When you think you may have a food borne illness seek medical attention. Handle food properly. Clean all food preparation surfaces thoroughly. Use a food thermometer to make sure food is cooked to the recommended temperature. (Food color does not indicate whether the food is completely cooked.) Store food at the proper temperature. Discard expired food items. Clean, sanitize and air dry, as able, reusable grocery bags that may have leaked meat drippings from transporting food items from the grocery store to home. Engage in proper and regular handwashing. Handwashing is the best way to stop the spread of infection.

This is a great rule of thumb: *When in doubt, throw it out!*

Do what it takes to reduce the chance of you or your family members getting a costly foodborne illness. Learn all you can about food safety and proper food handling. It is important to keep your food safe and reduce the risk of a foodborne illness. Below are a few resources that can provide additional valuable information.