

# FOODBORNE DISEASE OUTBREAKS

THE 3 TYPES OF DATA USED TO LINK ILLNESSES TO CONTAMINATED FOODS AND SOLVE OUTBREAKS

Public health and regulatory officials gather 3 types of data during an investigation:  
EPIDEMIOLOGIC | TRACEBACK | FOOD & ENVIRONMENTAL TESTING

## EPIDEMIOLOGIC



Patterns in where and when people got sick, and past outbreaks caused by the same germ

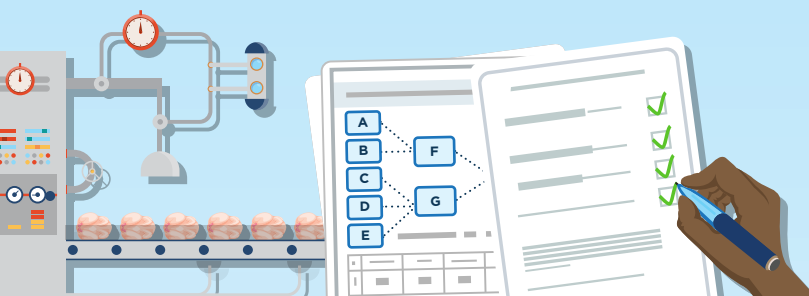


Interviews with sick people to look for foods or other exposures occurring more often than expected



Discovery of clusters of unrelated sick people who ate at the same restaurant, shopped at the same grocery store, or attended the same event

## TRACEBACK



A common point of contamination in the distribution chain from farm to fork, identified by reviewing records collected from restaurants or stores where sick people ate or shopped

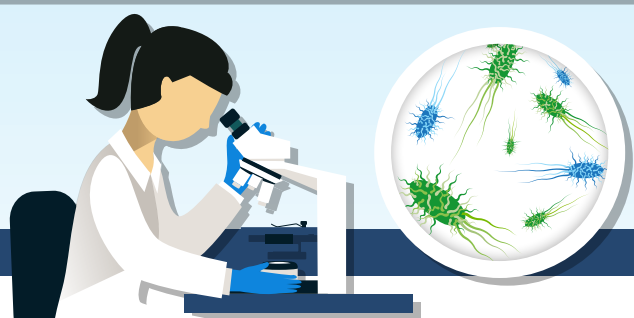


Inspections in food production facilities, on farms, and in restaurants that identify food safety risks

## FOOD & ENVIRONMENTAL TESTING



The germ that caused illness is found in a food item collected from a sick person's home, a retail location, or in the food production environment



The same DNA fingerprint linking germs found in foods or production environments to germs found in sick people

## ACTIONS TO STOP THE OUTBREAK

Health officials evaluate all of these types of data to try to identify the source of the outbreak. Actions to protect the public are taken when there is clear and convincing information linking illness to a contaminated food.



Health officials warn the public



Companies recall contaminated products



Temporary closure of restaurants or food production facilities

## CONSTANTLY IMPROVING



Health officials do not solve every outbreak. Sometimes outbreaks end before enough information is gathered to identify the likely source. Officials are constantly developing new ways to investigate and solve outbreaks faster.



Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
National Center for Emerging and Zoonotic Infectious Diseases

FOR MORE OUTBREAK INFO:  
[www.cdc.gov/foodsafety/outbreaks](http://www.cdc.gov/foodsafety/outbreaks)