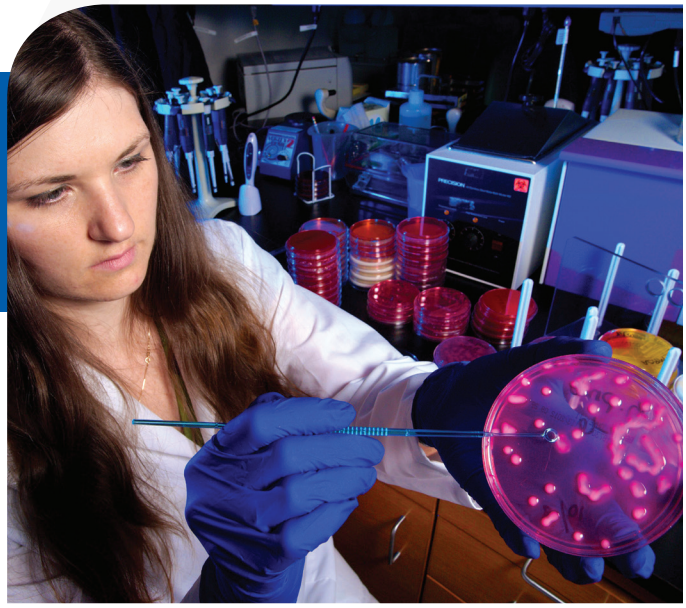
CDC AND FOOD SAFETY

Learn how CDC works 24/7 to protect Americans from foodborne diseases.



CDC lab employees seek answers to protect people from contaminated food.

Why it's important for CDC to fight foodborne diseases

Foodborne diseases make about 48 million Americans sick every year – that's 1 out of every 6 people. Sadly, about 3,000 of these people die. At the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), we realize that foodborne diseases are a serious threat to our nation's health, and we use every tool available to keep Americans safe from contaminated foods.

What CDC does to keep Americans safe from contaminated food

When a threat from a new foodborne disease appears, we may not know right away why or how many people are affected, but we have world-class expertise to find out what is making people sick or die and what to do about it.

- CDC's laboratory scientists find out:
  - What germ is making people sick?
  - Is the strain of germs that is making people sick found in a particular food they ate? We know each germ's unique DNA "fingerprint," so we can find the answer to this question.

CDC tracks diseases 24/7

Our disease detectives collect and analyze data on foodborne diseases to find out:

- Where are outbreaks happening?
- What foods or situations might have caused the outbreaks?
- What are some new steps we can take to keep our food safe?

CDC manages a nationwide network of labs that perform DNA fingerprinting and yield other information on germs that cause foodborne diseases.

CDC shares what we know

- We provide advice to consumers and businesses to help keep foods safe and prevent people from getting sick.
- We share data and findings from CDC investigations with those who can develop policies on food safety.
  - In 2014, for example, CDC information helped drive the Food Safety Modernization Act and the egg safety regulation—two landmark laws that aim to prevent foodborne diseases and save lives.
- We share new technology and information with local, state, and federal partners.
- We publish a report card on progress in preventing foodborne diseases. The report card is part of the work of FoodNet (the Foodborne Diseases Active Surveillance Network).

CDC connects with others who play a critical role in keeping food safe

CDC works closely with many partners to ensure that news about foodborne sickness and ways to keep our food safe can be shared broadly to all who are in a position to help. Partners include:

- U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA)
- U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS)

- Health departments
- Industry and business, including farms, food manufacturers and shippers, restaurants, and grocery stores
- Consumers

CDC is on 24/7 to track and report on foodborne sicknesses

Our work shows that we've tackled some of the foodborne diseases and are seeing fewer problems with contamination of certain types of foods. We know several factors played a role in this decrease:

- More knowledge about how to prevent contamination.
- Cleaner slaughter methods, microbial testing, and better inspections in ground beef processing plants.
- Improvements in the FDA model Food Code.
- Food workers and consumers being more careful about handling and cooking ground beef.

However, data on foodborne sickness shows us that we need more progress in reducing illnesses caused by Salmonella and Vibrio.

About Salmonella and Vibrio:

- Salmonella can contaminate a wide variety of foods, and there are many different types of Salmonella. Controlling Salmonella is challenging. Data from the Foodborne Diseases Active Surveillance Network (FoodNet) tells us that Salmonella causes the most hospitalizations and deaths of all foodborne diseases tracked by FoodNet.
- Vibrio infections are rare, but often serious. They are caused by eating contaminated seafood or exposing an open wound to seawater. Data from FoodNet tells us that more work must be done to counter the threat from Vibrio infections.

The future of food safety

CDC will:

- Seek more effective methods to quickly identify, characterize, and fingerprint Salmonella and other food-related germs and toxins in public health laboratories.
- Speed up the response to outbreaks of foodborne diseases.
- Integrate the surveillance systems used to track foodborne diseases and share data more effectively, as called for in The Food Safety Modernization Act (2014).
- Use of advanced molecular detection technology to track outbreaks.

In keeping Americans safe from contaminated food, CDC faces many challenges

It will always be tough to keep food safe, and CDC will continually adapt our strategies to cope with new challenges. CDC disease detectives are seeking answers on:

- Antibiotic resistance because of unnecessary antibiotics for livestock.
- New and emerging germs and toxins.
- New and different contaminated foods.
  - » In recent years we've seen people get sick from prepackaged raw cookie dough, bagged spinach, and peanut butter.
- More cases where people across more than one state get sick from the same contaminated food. These types of cases are more difficult to track and resolve.
  - » As an example, it was difficult to track what was making people sick across 14 states in 2014. The contaminated food turned out to be contaminated sprouted chia powder.

CDC disease detectives must stay informed about:

- Changes in our food production and supply that create the need for new food safety measures.
- Changes in the environment, such as natural disasters or pollution, that can lead to food contamination.

To learn more about CDC's 24/7 role in saving lives and protecting people visit About Us:
http://www.cdc.gov/24-7/

To view this fact sheet on the web, visit:
http:/www.cdc.gov/24-7/CDCFastFacts/CDCFacts.html