Public health and regulatory officials gather 3 types of data during an investigation:

**EPIDEMIOLOGIC**
- Patterns in where and when people get 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.

FOR MORE OUTBREAK INFO:
www.cdc.gov/foodsafety/outbreaks