

TEXT: Timeline for Identifying and Reporting Cases in Foodborne Outbreaks

If you get food poisoning and go to the doctor, here's what may happen to your test results.

A series of events allows public health officials to find out whether your illness is linked to an outbreak.

TEXT: Friday, January 01

You eat a contaminated food

IMAGE: *A family is seated around a dining table eating a meal; a knife and fork mark the date on a calendar.*

TEXT: After a few days, you start to feel sick with nausea or diarrhea

IMAGE: *Days are marked off on the calendar until January 03, where a sad face marks the date.*

TEXT: Monday, January 04

You go to a healthcare provider and give a sample

IMAGE: *A car arrives at a clinic; a stethoscope marks the date on the calendar.*

TEXT: Wednesday, January 06

Your sample arrives at a clinical laboratory for testing

IMAGE: *A truck leaves the clinic and arrives at a lab; a truck and test tubes mark the calendar.*

TEXT: Thursday, January 07

Tests are run on your sample

IMAGE: *Bacteria are shown on floating on a petri dish, with the day marked on the calendar.*

TEXT: Friday, January 08

The lab identifies the germ making you sick

IMAGE: *A clipboard is shown with a checklist and "E. coli" marked, with an icon marking the calendar.*

TEXT: Monday, January 11

The clinical laboratory sends a sample of your bacteria to a public health laboratory

Shipping can take up to a week

IMAGE: *A truck drives away from the lab, with the days traced on the calendar.*

TEXT: Wednesday, January 13

The public health laboratory receives the sample for more testing

IMAGE: *Bacteria as shown floating on a petri dish; a DNA strand marks the calendar.*

TEXT: January 15 – 20

The laboratory performs whole genome sequencing (WGS) analysis and other tests

IMAGE: *A DNA strand is observed by a magnifying glass; days are marked on the calendar as time passes.*

TEXT: Wednesday, January 20

WGS shows more details about the germ making you sick

IMAGE: *A checkmark appears next to the DNA strand and marks the calendar.*

TEXT: Friday, January 22

The public health laboratory sends WGS results to CDC

IMAGE: *A person is seated at a desk with a large computer monitor; a dotted line traces from a DNA strand to a document icon, a database icon, and the person's computer.*

TEXT: Monday, January 25

TEXT: CDC determines if your illness is related to other recent illnesses

IMAGE: *A CDC laptop displays a bar graph forming over time.*

IMAGE: *The entire calendar timeline with icons is shown.*

TEXT: Total time: 3-4 weeks

Public health officials work to detect and solve outbreaks as quickly as they can.

You can help solve outbreaks and save lives.

If you think you have food poisoning, report it to your local or state health department. You can help us solve outbreaks and help protect others from getting sick.

<https://www.cdc.gov/foodsafety/outbreaks/investigating-outbreaks/report-illness/public.html>