

FOODBORNE ILLNESS EPIDEMIOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION CHECKLIST
DOCUMENT A RESPONSE TO EACH ITEM LISTED

Note: This is only one part of a foodborne outbreak investigation. Other elements include the environmental investigation. Please refer to the Foodborne Illness Environmental Health Assessment Report, Foodborne Illness Investigation: Food Worker Interview, and Foodborne Illness Investigation: Food Preparation Review Worksheet.

- Maintain foodborne illness log to identify potential outbreaks from individual reports.
- Determine if report warrants further Epi investigation. Gather additional information to confirm details of incident. Get complete menu and identify other potentially exposed groups (i.e., other people in party, guests, list of attendees), phone numbers, household exposure(s). Determine if there are any leftover food items.
- Obtain any medical information from primary M.D., emergency room/hospital records, lab. Document the number hospitalized and the number who sought medical care. Were clinical specimens collected and tested? If not, obtain the appropriate specimen for suspect etiologic agent (stool, vomitus, blood), if possible.
- Develop and administer questionnaire. Interview both sick and well individuals (including employees). Appendix D and E are examples of foodborne outbreak questionnaires. Appendix D is in EpiInfo format and Appendix E is a modified document from CDC.
- Document dates and times of illness onset and exposures, illness duration and location(s) of illness occurrence.
- Form preliminary hypothesis of etiologic agent, source and means of transmission.
- Decide on methodology (study design), cohort or case-control study.
- Determine definition of illness (or case definition if case-control study), based on symptoms, incubation, duration, exposure and/or lab.
- Determine number of persons in study, the number of ill persons (or number of cases if case-control study).
- List symptoms and frequency of symptoms.
- Plot an epidemic curve.
- Provide a food specific attack rate table (if cohort study).
- Provide 2 X 2 contingency table(s), pertinent measures of association and statistics.
- Finalize hypothesis of etiologic agent, source and means of transmission.
- Document how potential confounding factors were controlled and provide preventive measures.
- Write report (introduction/background, methodology, results, conclusion, and recommendations). Include appropriate CDC form.