



A CUP OF HEALTH WITH CDC

Make it Well Done

Multistate Outbreak of Salmonella Chester Infections Associated with Frozen Meals — United States, 2010

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[Announcer] This program is presented by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

[Dr. Gaynes] Welcome to *A Cup of Health with CDC*, a weekly feature of the *MMWR*, the Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report. I'm your host, Dr. Robert Gaynes.

In today's fast-paced society, microwave meals are a staple of American diets. An outbreak of *Salmonella*, caused by an undercooked frozen meal, is a harsh reminder to carefully follow all cooking instructions.

Leslie Hausman is a researcher with CDC's National Center for Emerging and Zoonotic Infectious Diseases. She's joining us today to discuss the importance of thoroughly cooking all food before eating. Welcome to the show, Leslie.

[Ms. Hausman] Thank you, Bob. I appreciate you inviting me.

[Dr. Gaynes] Leslie, how common are foodborne outbreaks?

[Ms. Hausman] Every year, one in six Americans gets sick from foodborne illnesses. About 128,000 people are hospitalized and 3,000 die.

[Dr. Gaynes] Does cooking food kill all potential germs?

[Ms. Hausman] Food is safe to eat once it has been heated to a high enough internal temperature to kill harmful germs. The only way to be sure food is safe to eat after cooking is by using a food thermometer. The internal temperature will vary, depending on the food. For example, all poultry should be 165 degrees Fahrenheit.

[Dr. Gaynes] Let's talk about microwave cooking. How can you determine whether a meal is "heat and serve" or needs to be fully cooked?

[Ms. Hausman] Some meals are "ready to eat" and only need to be heated. Others include raw ingredients which can contain germs that cause foodborne illnesses. To make sure these products are safe to eat, it's important you carefully read and follow the cooking directions printed on the packaging. This includes both microwaving and allowing the product to sit for the recommended time prior to eating.

[Dr. Gaynes] Leslie, you mentioned foodborne illness. What are the symptoms of food poisoning?

[Ms. Hausman] If someone has food poisoning, it will take 12 to 72 hours before they become ill. The symptoms are diarrhea, fever, abdominal cramps, and vomiting. Usually symptoms last four to seven days and most people get better without treatment. Food poisoning can cause more serious illness in older adults, infants, and people with chronic diseases.

[Dr. Gaynes] If a person thinks they have a foodborne illness, when should they need to seek medical attention?

[Ms. Hausman] You should seek medical attention if you have diarrhea accompanied by a high fever—a temperature over 101.5 degree Fahrenheit, measured orally; blood in your stool; prolonged vomiting that prevents keeping liquids down, which can lead to dehydration (signs of dehydration can be a decrease in urination, a dry mouth and throat, and feeling dizzy when standing up); and lastly, you should seek medical attention if you have diarrhea that lasts more than three days.

[Dr. Gaynes] Leslie, where can listeners get more information about preventing food poisoning?

[Ms. Hausman] Listeners can go to cdc.gov/foodsafety, all one word. You can find the recommended internal temperatures on this website.

[Dr. Gaynes] Thanks, Leslie. I've been talking today with CDC's Leslie Hausman about the importance of thoroughly cooking all food before eating.

Before preparing a frozen meal, carefully read and follow the instructions, including how long to cook the meal and how long to allow the food to sit before eating.

Until next time, be well. This is Dr. Robert Gaynes for *A Cup of Health with CDC*.

[Announcer] For the most accurate health information, visit www.cdc.gov or call 1-800-CDC-INFO.