

Ask CDC

CDC – Disease Detectives

[Announcer] This podcast is presented by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. CDC – safer, healthier people.

Welcome to *Ask CDC*, the weekly podcast that answers *your* questions. I'm your host, Susan Laird.

Our question this week is, "How does CDC investigate a foodborne outbreak?"

Most foodborne outbreaks are identified and investigated by local and state health departments. CDC provides consultation on some of those, as well as assistance with outbreaks that are large, unusual, or severe. On some investigations, CDC works with other public health partners, such as the Food and Drug Administration, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the Environmental Protection Agency.

CDC maintains and monitors several disease surveillance, or watch, systems, and outbreak detection systems. Once a potential outbreak has been detected, the CDC's OutbreakNet Team starts the investigation. Working with public health partners, this team coordinates communications among states and may lead scientific studies. These studies are used to develop a list of suspicious foods and then CDC works to determine how the food became contaminated. Once a contaminated food source is identified, regulatory agencies such as FDA and USDA, work to control the outbreak. CDC continues to investigate potential sources of illness and monitors for additional illnesses to determine when the outbreak is over. CDC also advises the public about what they can do to protect themselves, advises the medical community about how to treat the infections, and works closely with the regulatory agencies and industry to learn how to prevent similar outbreaks in the future.

If you think you or a family member may be experiencing a foodborne illness, you should see your doctor. If it *is* a foodborne illness, your doctor will report this information to your state and local health departments. Then, those authorities will notify the CDC.

For more information, visit our website at www.cdc.gov and search for "outbreaks," or call 1-800-CDC-INFO.

Thanks for listening. To submit *your* question to *Ask CDC*, email us at askcdc@cdc.gov.

[Announcer] For the most accurate health information, visit www.cdc.gov or call 1-800-CDC-INFO, 24/7.