

Basics

Health

Real Life Story

George was the cook at a local restaurant. During the week, George was usually the only person working in the kitchen despite a busy lunch rush on weekdays. One day a sanitarian from the local health department told the owner that there had been a number of cases of foodborne illness reported. In each case, the individual ate at the restaurant three days earlier. George had not been feeling well, but had not told the owner because he needed the money and there was nobody else available to work in his place. The restaurant was closed for six days while the health department completed the outbreak investigation. George was not allowed to return to work because he was being treated for a Shigellosis infection. The health department had confirmed 15 cases of Shigellosis from the restaurant. Even though most of the customers who became ill were long-time customers who chose not to take legal action, business at the restaurant dropped about 75%. Three weeks after reopening, the restaurant went out of business permanently.

Source:

Jankowski, Nicholas S. *Professional Food Manager Certification Training*. 3rd ed. Ann Arbor, MI: NSF International; 2004; 53-54.

🚫 Scary Facts:

- Sneezing can propel over 6,000 droplets over 10 feet
- The CDC estimates that there are approximately 76 million illnesses, 325,000 hospitalizations, and 5,000 deaths in the United States each year associated with foodborne illnesses
- 1 Foodborne illness can affect 1 person or hundreds

Symptoms to watch for:

1. Look for vomiting, diarrhea, nausea, fever or jaundice. Pay attention to employees' habits such as frequent trips to the restroom or coughing and sneezing. These symptoms cannot be ignored. Staff must immediately report them to the PIC. And don't forget discharges from eyes, nose, cuts or sores.
2. Employees with wounds, cuts, burns or sores must maintain a double layer of protection by first covering the area with a clean bandage and wearing a clean disposable glove. Management can more easily monitor proper bandage usage when brightly colored bandages are worn.
3. Food staff are required to report to management these confirmed illness to the PIC, who then must report it to the health department:
 - **Hepatitis A:** is a liver disease. Symptoms include jaundice (yellowing of the skin), fatigue, abdominal pain, loss of appetite, nausea, diarrhea, and fever. Good personal hygiene and proper sanitation can also help prevent the spread.
 - **Norovirus:** used to be referred to as "Norwalk like viruses". Symptoms include: acute onset of vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal cramps and nausea. Transmission is usually due to poor handwashing but can also be spread person to person, and through contaminated food and contact with contaminated objects. Those affected can be contagious hours before they feel ill and for 2 -3 days after they feel better.

- **Shigella:** is a bacterial illness that can be caused by a very small amount of organisms. It only takes 10- 200 organisms to cause and infection. Symptoms include: watery or bloody diarrhea, abdominal pain, fever, and malaise (a general feeling of tiredness or fatigue). Transmission is usually caused by poor handwashing or ingestion of contaminated food or drink. Transmission can also occur through flies. Unfortunately Shigella is becoming increasingly resistant to common antibiotics.
- **E. coli O157:H7:** is a bacterial illness that produces toxins. Symptoms include: acute bloody diarrhea and abdominal cramps with little or no fever. This illness may progress into kidney failure. Some patients will develop chronic kidney failure, seizures, strokes, and require bowel removal. Transmission: a major source is through ground beef, other sources include unpasteurized dairy products, improperly washed produce and swimming in contaminated waters. E.coli is easily transmitted person to person. Some infections can be prevented by proper handwashing, proper cooking of raw meats, and thoroughly washing produce especially leafy greens.
- **Salmonella Typhi:** is a bacterial disease normally associated with developing countries outside the United States and is commonly associated with traveling outside the U.S. Salmonella is spread by improper handwashing and ingestion through contaminated food and water. This illness commonly has carriers (people who are infected but not ill). Symptoms include: Fever, abdominal cramps, and diarrhea (sometimes bloody) This disease may enter the blood stream and later cause arthritis.

Important Note: Most foodborne illnesses can be prevented by proper handwashing and practicing basic food safety procedures.

4. **Why is it important to educate your staff to report their illness?** Many illnesses are easily transmitted person to person through normal behavior and can subsequently be transmitted to the food you are preparing, cooking or serving.

Teaching tips:

- Limit training meetings to about 20 minutes
- Use a sign-in sheet to document training (a sign-in form follows on page 15)
- Let employees know that they can be vaccinated against Hepatitis A
- Use a log to track employee training (a sample log follows on page 16)

Teaching Aids: FDA Forms

Handwashing

Real Life Story

9 people were sickened with Shigella after eating at a restaurant in Southern Washington State. The infection was traced back to an infected female food worker who did not wash her hands properly after using the restroom and returning to work.

Scary Facts:

- Studies indicate that almost 33% of people do not wash their hands after using the bathroom
- Pathogens, disease causing germs, are easily transferred to food and people
- Pathogens cannot be seen with the naked eye
- Pathogens like to grow in the moist crevices of your hands and body and on the scalp

Handwashing

1. Why is it important to properly wash your hands?

- Unwashed and improperly washed hands are the main cause of foodborne illness

2. How should you wash your hands?

- At a dedicated hand washing station that has both hot and cold running water of at least 100°F
- With an approved cleaning compound such as hand soap
- By rubbing your hands and arms vigorously for at least 10 – 15 seconds or the time that it takes to sing “Happy Birthday to You” two times
- Remember to pay particular attention to the area underneath your fingernails
- Rinse hands thoroughly under running water
- Always dry your hands on paper toweling or use a hot air dryer
- Use paper towels to turn water off and if in the restroom, to open the door

3. When should you wash your hands?

- Before you start work
- After using the restroom
- Before and after handling raw meat, poultry, and/or fish
- After touching your hair, face or body
- After sneezing, coughing or using a tissue
- After taking out the garbage
- After smoking, eating, drinking, or chewing gum or tobacco
- After handling chemicals that might affect the safety of food
- After clearing tables or busing dirty dishes
- After touching clothing or aprons
- After touching anything else that may contaminate hands such as unsanitized equipment or work surfaces or soiled towels
- Before putting on or changing gloves
- After wiping your nose or rubbing your ear
- After completing a cleaning job

4. Where should you wash your hands?

- At a dedicated handwashing station ONLY!
- Always wash your hands at the handwashing station closest to your work area

5. Proper glove usage when handling ready-to-eat foods:

- Know when you are required to wear gloves
- Know how to put on your gloves properly
- Know how to take off your gloves properly
- Know when it is necessary to change your gloves. (it is necessary to change gloves anytime you should wash your hands. See poster on page 8)

Teaching tips:

Demonstrate the correct way to wash hands and watch them repeat. Use teaching tools such as fluorescing products with a black light to further demonstrate effective hand washing. Such products are available on the internet and from industry supply companies. Many local health departments have these products and may loan them or come to your establishment to demonstrate proper handwashing using fluorescing products.

Teaching Aids: Next Page