

Employee Health - Employee Responsibilities

Do food employees have a responsibility to prevent foodborne illness?

Yes, food employees share the responsibility with management for preventing foodborne illness and are required to know:

- The relationship between their job responsibilities and the potential risks of foodborne illness;
- How employee health is related to foodborne illness;
- The need to immediately report symptoms of vomiting, diarrhea, jaundice, sore throat with fever, diagnosis of illness caused by a Big 5 pathogen, exposure to a Big 5 pathogen, or an exposed infected wound or cut on the hands or arms to their manager (see Form 1-B);
- How restriction and/or exclusion from working with food prevents foodborne illness; and
- How proper hand hygiene and no bare hand contact with RTE food can prevent foodborne illness.

Can food employees work if their symptoms are from a non-infectious condition?

Yes, food employees can work as long as they can provide medical documentation indicating that the symptoms are from a non-infectious condition. Some non-infectious conditions include Crohn's disease (an ongoing disorder that causes inflammation of the gastrointestinal system), irritable bowel syndrome, some liver diseases, and symptoms commonly experienced during stages of pregnancy.

If an infected wound, cut, or burn is covered, can employees continue working?

Yes, food employees can continue working as long as the wound, cut, or burn is properly covered with a waterproof cover like a finger cot and a disposable glove, or a dry, durable, tightfitting bandage.

What types of exposure must food employees report to management?

If a food employee is exposed to any of the following situations, it must be reported, such as in cases of:

- Ingesting or handling food that was implicated in a foodborne outbreak;
- Consuming food that was prepared by someone with an illness that resulted from one of the Big 5 pathogens;

- Attending or working in a location that had a confirmed foodborne illness outbreak;
- Living with someone who works or was in a location that was known to have had a foodborne illness outbreak; or
- Living with someone who was diagnosed with an illness that resulted from one of the Big 5 pathogens.

What other precautions can a food employee take to prevent the spread of foodborne illness?

Food employees can help prevent foodborne illness by:

- Not touching RTE food with bare hands;
- Washing hands frequently, especially whenever they are soiled or have touched anything that has contaminated them;
- Not working when ill;
- Knowing all aspects of food handling and the risk factors associated with foodborne illness; and
- Being aware that uncontrolled risk factors can cause consumers to have foodborne illness.