

Food Bites

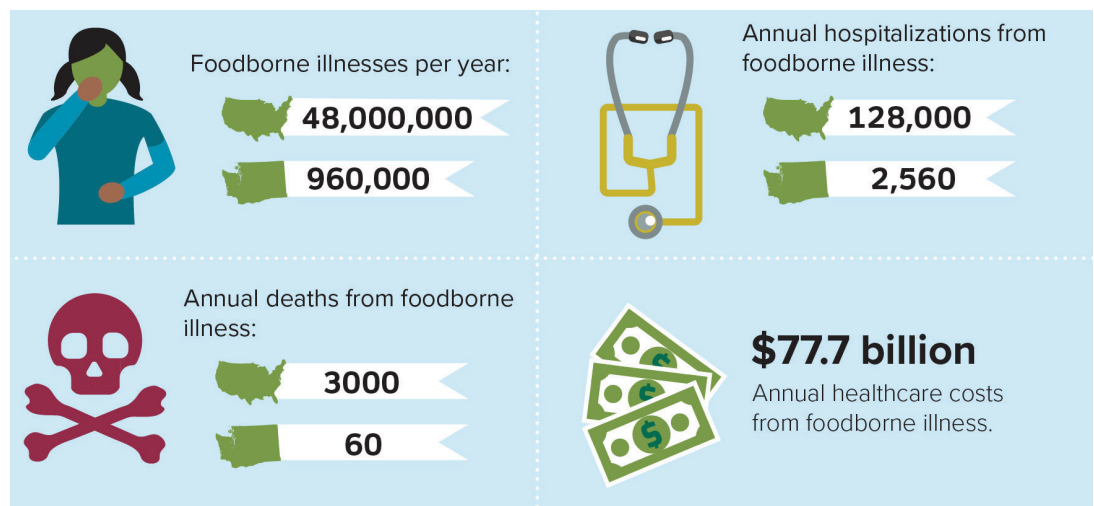
Fall 2017



Protect your customers and staff!

You're in the health business, too.

Projectile vomiting, watery diarrhea, extreme nausea, and intense cramping...? You may be suffering from foodborne illness! About 48 million people suffer from foodborne illness every year in the U.S. About 3000 die. Related health care costs are about \$78 billion. In Washington State, almost 1 million get sick and 60 die from foodborne illnesses each year.



Individual costs range from \$57 to \$24,763, from missed days at work, doctor and hospital bills. Business costs can include lawsuits, insurance premiums rising, and staff missing work. Businesses can lose customers because of negative media attention and bad word of mouth.

What causes foodborne illnesses in Pierce County?

From 2014 to 2016, outbreaks in Pierce County affected more than 270 people.

- Bacteria like salmonella caused 26 outbreaks. These bacteria grow when potentially hazardous foods are in the danger zone between 41°F and 135°F for too long. Common causes include storage at room temperature. They also include improper hot holding, cold holding, cooling procedures, and reheating procedures.

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SAVE \$!

See page 3 for more details.

FDA grant funds food safety tools!

We received a Food and Drug Administration grant to help us identify and address the most common food safety risk factors among Pierce County food service establishments.

Improper temperature control is the most common risk factor. We created daily temperature log stickers and magnets to help reduce the risk. Employees take temperatures and log them. The person in charge can easily verify if temperatures were taken and use the logs as training tools. QR codes on the logs link to food safety videos in eight languages.

We hope these tools help you serve safe food and avoid foodborne illness in your establishments.

Ask your inspector or contact us at food@tpchd.org to get these free tools.

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- Norovirus caused eight outbreaks, affecting at least 158 people. Norovirus is very contagious. How does it spread so easily? Sick food workers, improper handwashing, and bare hand contact with ready-to-eat foods are the cause.
- We found other outbreaks linked with improper preparation of foods. This includes cross contamination between raw and ready-to-eat foods and inadequate produce washing.

What can I do to prevent foodborne illness outbreaks?

- Educate. Educate food workers on when to wash hands, proper glove use, and staying home when when sick.
- Take temperatures. Check temperatures in all cold holding and hot holding units. Cold holding should be at 41°F or below and hot holding at 135°F or above. If you find temperatures in the danger zone (between 41°F and 135°F), discard food and adjust the units.
- Stay out of the danger zone. Don't store foods at room temperature. Reheat cooled foods to 165°F within two hours. Cool foods at a food depth of two inches, uncovered in the walk-in refrigerator.
- Check food preparation. Avoid cross contamination. Don't work with raw meats and produce in the same area. Be sure to properly wash, rinse, and sanitize all food contact surfaces. Rinse all produce before cutting or serving.
- Report illnesses. If you or your coworkers have diarrhea or vomiting, tell your supervisor and go home. Supervisors: if your staff or customers say they are ill, call us at (253) 798-4712. We ask about symptoms and meal history to track down and confirm the cause.



Now online!

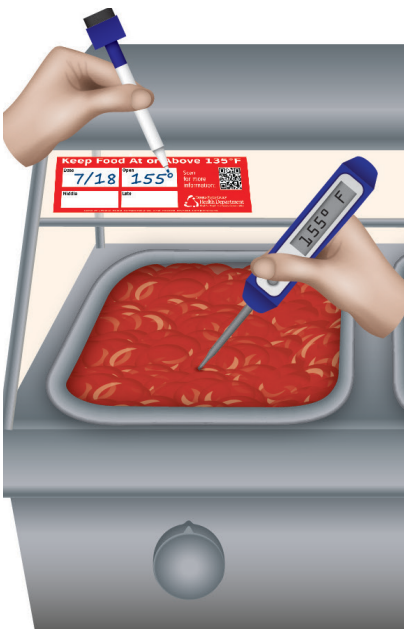
- Restaurant closure list and reasons at www.tpchd.org/food/food-establishment-inspection-reports/food-establishment-closures/.
- Sign up for closure information and other alerts at tpchd.org/email.
- Restaurant inspection reports are now more user-friendly at www.tpchd.org/food/food-establishment-inspection-reports/.
- Report illnesses and concerns at www.tpchd.org/food/report-an-illness-or-concern/.

2018 permit fees

Our Food Safety Program is fee for service. We charge fees to cover our costs. We do not get any tax revenues to support our work. Because of the recession, we did not raise fees from 2011-2014 to cover increased costs. Our Food Advisory Board Budget Workgroup advised us to raise fees incrementally over the next three to five years to reduce deficit.

Please contact us with questions.

Find past and future fee schedules at www.tpchd.org/about/fee-schedule/



Restaurant ratings are in our future

Sooner or later, restaurant rating is coming to Pierce County.

Rating systems exist in many areas of the country, and our Board of Health, our Food Service Advisory Committee and others have asked us to explore what would work well in Pierce County.

It's part of our ongoing effort to make it easy for the dining public to understand food safety standards.

Public Health – Seattle & King County began rating restaurants in January 2017. They used extensive research and public input to develop their rating system. Ratings reflect an establishment's food safety practices and performance over time. Restaurants have an opportunity to improve their rating every time period. King County uses the emoji type images to communicate ratings to the public. Learn more information about their rating system at www.kingcounty.gov/foodsafety.

What are your thoughts on a rating system here? Would you like to help us consider options? Let us know at food@tpchd.org.



REMINDER: PERMIT PAYMENTS DUE BY FEBRUARY

Your establishment's operating permit is valid Feb. 1 through Jan. 31 each year. If you don't pay by Feb. 1, you will receive a late fee. Please remember you can't transfer permits between owners or locations. If your permit expired or your name isn't on it, please contact us at (253) 798-6460.

MAKING CHANGES?

Are you planning to change your menu, remodel, start catering, or add a buffet? Contact plan review at food@tpchd.org or (253) 798-4711.

Learn more about how to prevent outbreaks!

Food manager course

Held quarterly, benefits include:

- Increasing profits through better sanitation.
- Motivating workers through Self-Inspection Program (SIP).
- Understanding food service regulations and how to prevent foodborne illness.
- Meeting person in charge (PIC) requirements.
- A five-year Washington State Food Worker Card.

Certified booth operator classes

Classes held in spring and early summer. You may be eligible for lower permit fees if you operated a temporary event in Pierce County with:

- The same kitchen/facility for food preparation and service (e.g., church kitchen).
- A mobile truck or other self-contained unit.
- The same menu and booth setup for each event.

Contact Amanda Peters at (253) 798-4709 or apeters@tpchd.org to see if you qualify.

Class dates, applications and more at www.tpchd.org/food, food@tpchd.org or (253) 798-4709.



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PHONE LINES

Temporary Events (253) 798-4709	Plan Review (253) 798-4711	Food Safety Complaints (253) 798-4559	Illness Reporting (253) 798-4712
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