

Environmental health checklist when responding to a suspected bacterial intoxication

1. Ask management if they have received any illness complaints. If they have, and the complaints were not reported to EH, inform them that this is a violation of the food code and that all future complaints need to be reported.
2. Because bacterial intoxications are not spread by person-to-person transmission but rather by ingesting a food that has been time/temperature abused and has developed toxins, employee interviews are not necessary. However, it is still important to ask management about any recent illness among employees, as employees may have eaten the same food item.
3. Obtain credit card receipts, reservation lists, online reservation lists (ex: Open Table) and/or takeout/carry out orders for the meal date in question. Provide these to Epi.
4. Obtain restaurant menu (if different from online menu) and ask if the establishment had any specials on the date in question.
5. Provide education on bacterial intoxications to management.
6. While on-site, conduct an Environmental Assessment and provide findings to Epi:
 - Review food flows of particular item(s) of interest and determine the potential for time/temperature abuse of those food items.
 - Does the establishment maintain temperature logs? Review available logs.
 - Take temperatures of foods both in hot and cold-holding.
 - Any cooling violations observed-issues with temperature or cooling methods?
 - Any reheating issues?
 - Review hand-hygiene: Adequate handwashing? Bare-hand contact with RTE?
 - Note violations and provide appropriate corrective actions
7. If Epi suspects and outbreak of *Staph. aureus*, ask management if any employee has a cut or open wound on hands or arms. During the observation period try to view workers hands to see if there are noticeable cuts/sores. And observe handwashing procedures.
8. Is any of the suspect food item that would have been served on the meal date in question remaining at the establishment? If yes, set it aside-do not serve. Notify Epi and discuss if sampling would be appropriate. If yes, Epi can help coordinate the collection of food samples by MDA.
9. After appropriate sampling has occurred, or if Epi determines sampling would not be appropriate, ensure the remaining food in question is completely discarded.