

# Environmental health checklist when responding to a *Salmonella* outbreak

### Employee Health

* Determine if the establishment has an illness policy and review the details of that policy.
* Review the employee illness log and assess recent employee illness.
* Implement the illness-screening form so management can screen all employees before they begin their shift.
  1. Anyone reporting illness must be excluded from work and referred to EH for re-interview.
  2. Inform Lead Epi if this occurs.
* Interview all employees, including management.
  1. If an employee has been recently ill with any GI symptoms (time frame determined by Epi):
     1. The employee is excluded until they test negative for *Salmonella* twice.
     2. Specimens must be collected at least 24 hours apart.
     3. The lead Epi can help arrange stool kit distribution.
* **Distribute stool kits to ALL employees, including management.**
  1. All employees must submit two stool samples, collected at least 24 hours apart, regardless of illness status.
  2. Explain the stool kit requirement clearly to the PIC so he/she can facilitate follow-through with staff.
  3. Stool kits must be returned to the Public Health Laboratory (coordinate with Epi).
  4. Any employee who has not submitted a stool kit by the date chosen by EH/Epi will be excluded until kits are received.
  5. Antibiotics are not recommended for most *Salmonella* infections. Taking antibiotics may prolong the duration of shedding of *Salmonella* in stool.

### Customer and Menu/Food Information

* Ask management if they have received any illness complaints.
  1. 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.
* Collect records to contact additional patrons from the meal date(s) in question, and provide them to the lead Epi:
  1. Credit card receipts with names
  2. Reservation lists
  3. Online reservation lists (ex: Open Table)
  4. Takeout/carry out orders
  5. Loyalty programs
* Obtain a restaurant menu (if different from online menu), provide to Epi.
* Ask if the establishment had any specials on the date(s) in question.
* Collect a list of food suppliers.
  1. This includes distributors, grocery stores, warehouse stores, etc.

### Environmental Assessment

* Review general cross contamination potential throughout the facility.
  1. How does the establishment clean the kitchen areas (i.e. using a hose to spray the floors, wiping cloth bucket practices)?
  2. How do they store food and utensils (i.e. dirty knives and utensils stored between prep tables, cutting boards with cloth underneath, raw above RTE in coolers)?
  3. How do they prep food (i.e. same cutting boards for raw and RTE, improper handwashing between changing tasks), etc.?
* Review food flows of particular item(s) of interest from receiving to service to determine the potential for cross contamination (by both hands and equipment).
* Determine if the establishment maintains temperature logs and review, if available.
* Take final cook temperatures of animal proteins.
* Assess if “risky” foods are being served.
  1. e.g.) Is the restaurant using raw shell eggs in any menu items: mayo, aioli, custards, desserts, hollandaise sauce, Bearnaise sauce, fancy drinks?
  2. Any other food items of interest reported by Epi.
* Ask if there have been any recent changes to the menu, food suppliers, or other unique events that occurred policy or practice-wise?
* Review hand-hygiene (adequate handwashing? Bare-hand contact with RTE?).
* Note violations and provide appropriate corrective actions.

### Cleaning, Sanitizing, Condemnation and Embargo

* Wash, rinse, and sanitize all food contact surfaces, equipment and utensils in the kitchen area.
  1. Standard bleach and quaternary ammonia concentrations are effective against *Salmonella*.
  2. Thorough cleaning of all surfaces, both food-contact and non-food-contact, is important to stop further contamination.
  3. Consider steam cleaning surfaces that cannot be cleaned with sanitizer.
* Embargo any remaining suspect food items from the meal date if available.
  1. Notify Epi and discuss if sampling would be appropriate. If yes, Epi can help coordinate the collection of food samples by MDA.
* After appropriate sampling has occurred, or if Epi determines sampling would not be appropriate, ensure the remaining food in question is completely discarded.
* Discard any ready-to-eats foods prepared by ill workers.

### Communication

* Provide *Salmonella* factsheet to management:

[MDH Salmonella Factsheet](https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/salmonellosis/salmonella.pdf)

* Establish the best method for ongoing communication with both Epi and the establishment regarding:
  1. Employee stool sample results and employee exclusion.
  2. Additional questions about food handling practices in the restaurant.
  3. Addition questions about invoices, purchasing, and financial records.