



HOW YOU CAN HELP SOLVE A NATIONAL FOODBORNE ILLNESS OUTBREAK INVESTIGATION

By providing information, you can help identify what has made you and others sick.

THE OUTBREAK BEGINS

You and multiple others across Canada get sick with symptoms related to foodborne disease (e.g. diarrhea, vomiting).



COLLECTING INFORMATION

 LABORATORY	 EPIDEMIOLOGIC	 FOOD SAFETY
You seek medical care and submit a stool sample for testing. The germ’s genetic fingerprint is compared to that of other germs and is found to be the same, suggesting that others got sick from the same food.	Public health officials interview you about the foods you ate before getting sick. Sharing store loyalty card records and receipts can provide detailed information to investigators about the foods you may have eaten. This can help identify common foods that people ate before becoming sick. You may be contacted again if more information is needed.	Records are reviewed to determine where suspect foods came from, and inspections are conducted to look for ways the germ may have come into contact with the food. Suspect foods are tested to see if the germ found in samples from sick people is also found in the food.
When individuals from multiple provinces or territories are ill, the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) investigates these illnesses through a coordinated national outbreak investigation.		

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

Information gathered from the laboratory, food safety investigation, and sick people are reviewed together. Though not all outbreaks are solved, all of this information combined may lead to the contaminated food being identified.

Public health actions: If a source is identified, PHAC alerts the public to the outbreak through the posting of a Public Health Notice and social media messaging, and a Food Recall Warning may be issued.



SUBSEQUENT ILLNESSES ARE PREVENTED