



FOODBORNE ILLNESS EDUCATIONAL VIDEOS: KEY TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the American Medical Association (AMA) have developed two videos to educate health care professionals and consumers about foodborne illnesses in the United States. Below are key terms and definitions used in the videos, as well as a list of FDA and other federal resources on foodborne illness.



Definitions

BACTERIA: microscopic living organisms that can be found everywhere. Bacteria can be dangerous, such as when they cause infection; or beneficial, as in the process of fermentation (such as in wine) and that of decomposition.

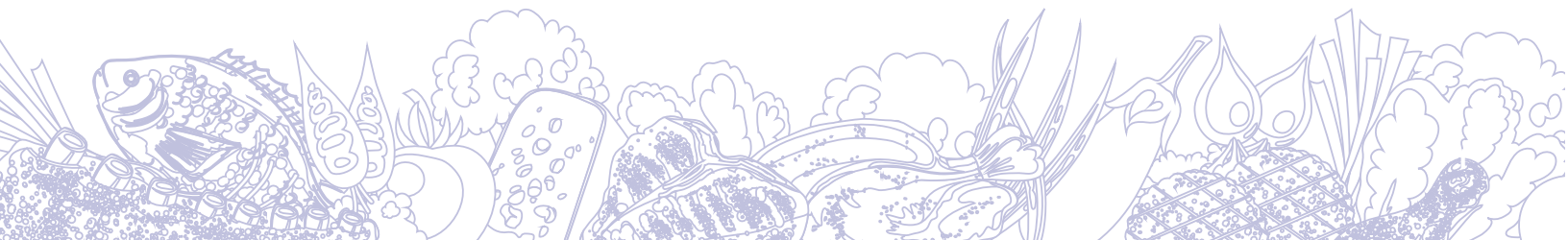
E. COLI: a species of bacterium normally present in the intestinal tract of humans and other animals. As a contaminant in food, some kinds of *E. coli* can result in illness and death.

FOODBORNE ILLNESS: any illness resulting from contaminated food. Sometimes called food poisoning.

GASTROENTERITIS: inflammation of the stomach and intestine, which may occur as a result of a foodborne illness.

HEPATITIS A: an acute viral hepatitis usually transmitted by ingestion of contaminated food or water.

LISTERIA: a type of bacterium that infects humans through contaminated food and can result in illness and death.





Definitions, continued

LISTERIOSIS: an infectious disease of humans, especially pregnant women in whom it may cause spontaneous abortion, premature birth or stillbirth, and persons with immune systems weakened by age, disease, or medications. It is often caused by food contaminated with the bacterium *Listeria monocytogenes*.

MICROORGANISM: any organism of microscopic size.

NOROVIRUS: A group of viruses that are a common cause of foodborne illness that can make a person feel very sick, but typically resolves within 2-3 days. Often called “stomach flu,” this virus spreads very quickly, especially in enclosed places like daycare centers, nursing homes, schools, and cruise ships.

PARASITE: an animal or plant that lives in or on a host (another animal or plant). It obtains nourishment from the host without benefiting or killing the host. Two parasites of concern regarding foodborne illness are [*Cryptosporidium parvum*](#) and [*Cyclospora cayetanensis*](#).

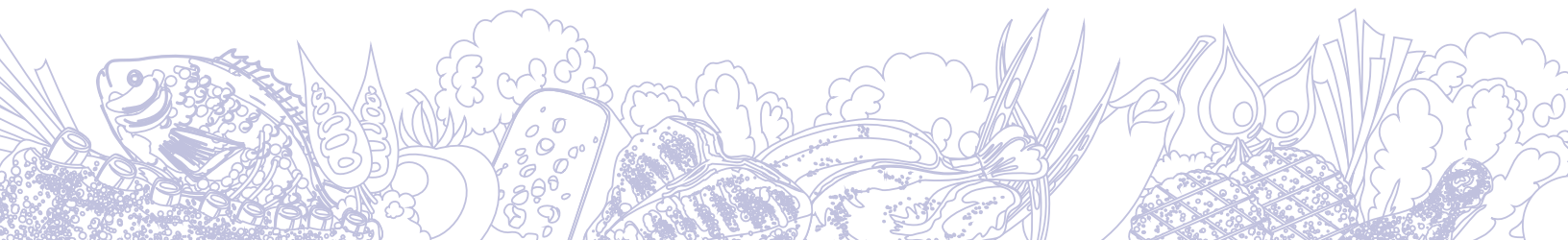
PARESTHESIA: an abnormal sensation, like “pins and needles,” caused by pressure on or damage to peripheral nerves. This is a potential neurological symptom caused by a foodborne illness.

PATHOGEN: any disease-producing agent, especially a virus, bacterium, parasite, or other microorganism.

SALMONELLA: any bacteria of the genus *Salmonella* that enters the digestive tract of humans and other mammals via contaminated food, which can cause abdominal pain and diarrhea and result in illness and death in humans.

SHIGA TOXIN-PRODUCING E. COLI: refers to a group of *E. coli* bacteria that produce powerful toxins, which can cause severe illness and death in humans.

VIRUS: an infectious agent that replicates only within the cells of living hosts—mainly bacteria, plants, animals, and humans.





Foodborne Illness Resources

1. **[STEPS FOR DIAGNOSING FOODBORNE ILLNESS CHECKLIST:](#)** Reinforces the four steps health professionals can use to diagnose foodborne illnesses: Suspect, Identify, Treat, and Report.
2. **[DIAGNOSTIC TOOLS FOR FOODBORNE ILLNESS FACT SHEET:](#)** Offers health professionals a list of tools for diagnosing foodborne illnesses.
3. **[REPORTING FOODBORNE ILLNESS FACT SHEET:](#)** Provides health professionals with information on reporting foodborne illnesses to local, state, and federal health agencies.
4. **[MOST COMMON FOODBORNE ILLNESSES FACT SHEET:](#)** Highlights the most common sources of foodborne illnesses.
5. **[RECENT PROMINENT FOODBORNE ILLNESS OUTBREAKS FACT SHEET:](#)** Highlights recent prominent foodborne illness outbreaks in the United States.
6. **[GROCERY SHOPPING TIPSHEET:](#)** Provides on-the-go tips for safe grocery shopping, which includes reviewing the sell-by date on foods, separating raw meat from other groceries, and using proper storage practices.
7. **[FOUR STEPS TO HANDLING AND PREPARING FOOD SAFELY FACT SHEET:](#)** Highlights the four steps to safely handling and preparing food in the home: “Clean, Separate, Cook, and Chill.”
8. **[CANNING TIPSHEET:](#)** A guide for practicing safe canning methods at home.

LEARN MORE

[CDC – Diagnosis and Management of Foodborne Illnesses](#)

[FDA Education Resource Library](#)

[FDA.gov/Food](#)

[FDA.gov – Bad Bug Book](#)

[CDC – Foodborne Germs and Illnesses](#)

[FoodKeeper App](#)

[FoodSafety.gov](#)

