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Holiday Food Safety by Lindsey Martin Webb



As the end of the year approaches, many people will be celebrating the holidays with feasts and festivities. It is important to keep food safety in mind to ensure a happy and healthy holiday season!

Foodborne illness affects 1 in 6 Americans every year. Many different disease-causing pathogens can contaminate food and beverages. The most common symptoms of foodborne disease include diarrhea and vomiting, but serious illness and death can also occur. Fortunately, food safety tips and resources are available to aid in preventing foodborne illness during the holiday season.

Be aware of food safety alerts and product recalls:

- Check www.foodsafety.gov and www.cdc.gov/foodsafety for important and up-to-date information on product recalls and outbreak investigations.
- Currently active multistate foodborne illness outbreak investigations which may affect holiday festivities this year include the following:
 - [Salmonella Agbeni associated with Duncan Hines cake mix](#): On November 5, 2018, [ConAgra Brands recalled four varieties of Duncan Hines cake mix](#) (Classic White, Classic Butter Golden, Signature Confetti, and Classic Yellow with various "best if used by dates" ranging from March 7 to 13, 2019) after contamination with *Salmonella* was identified. No Kansas cases have been reported to date, but the recalled products were sold nationwide. Do not bake with or eat recalled Duncan Hines cake mix, or eat cake prepared with recalled mix. Throw the mix away or return it to the store for a refund.
 - [Multidrug-Resistant Salmonella Reading linked to raw turkey products](#): CDC and public health and regulatory officials in several states are investigating a multistate outbreak of multidrug-resistant *Salmonella* infections linked to raw turkey products. As of November 5, 2018, 164 illnesses have been reported from 35 states, including 1 case from Kansas. Always handle raw turkey carefully and cook it thoroughly to prevent food poisoning. This outbreak is a reminder that raw turkey products can have germs that spread around food preparation areas and can make you sick. For information on safely preparing turkey, see CDC's [Food Safety Tips for your Holiday Turkey](#).

Shop Safely:

- Keep raw meat, poultry, and seafood away from other foods in your grocery cart.
- Buy cold foods last.
- Don't purchase canned goods that are dented, leaking, bulging, or rusted, as these may become a breeding ground for harmful bacteria.
- Ask the cashier to place your raw meat, poultry, and seafood in a separate bag.
- Bring foods directly home from the grocery store.
- Always make sure to buy milk, juice, and cider that has been pasteurized. Consuming unpasteurized beverages or food items made with unpasteurized products can lead to foodborne illness.



Holiday Food Safety Cont.

Clean:

- Have plenty of soap on hand and practice [good hand hygiene](#). Handwashing is one of the best ways to prevent the spread of illness. Wash hands with warm water and soap for 20 seconds before and after handling any food.
- Wash hands and food-contact surfaces (such as utensils, cutting boards, and countertops) before and after preparation of each food item.
- Rinse fruits and vegetables thoroughly under cool running water and use a produce brush to remove surface dirt.
- **Do not** rinse raw meat and poultry before cooking. This can cause germs to spread throughout the kitchen and increase the chances of foodborne illness.

Separate:

- Keep one cutting board for foods that will be cooked, such as raw meats and seafood, and a separate cutting board for ready-to-eat foods such as raw fruits and vegetables.
- Keep fruits and vegetables that will be eaten raw separate from raw meat, poultry, or seafood and from kitchen utensils used for those products.
- Do not put cooked meat or other food that is ready to eat on an unwashed plate that has held any raw eggs, meat, poultry, seafood, or their juices.
- Prepare uncooked recipes before recipes requiring raw meat to reduce cross-contamination.

Cook:

- Use a food thermometer to ensure that foods reach safe internal temperatures.
- Reheat leftovers to 165°F. Bring sauces, soups, and gravies to a rolling boil when reheating.
- Partial cooking should be avoided because it allows bacteria to grow. Cook meat and poultry completely at one time.
- Avoid consuming anything made with raw eggs or raw flour, such as uncooked cookie dough, cake or brownie batter, and homemade ice cream or eggnog made with raw eggs.
- Keep hot food hot using chafing dishes or crock pots. Hot items should remain above 140°F.

Chill:

- Take care with leftovers. Some bacteria that cause illness can grow in foods left at room temperature, even if the foods were properly cooked.
- Refrigerate leftovers as soon as possible. Divide leftovers into smaller portions so that they will cool more quickly.
- Discard any perishable foods left out at room temperature for 2 hours or more.
- Never defrost food at room temperature. Food can be defrosted safely in the refrigerator, under cold running water, or in the microwave. Food thawed in cold water or in the microwave should be cooked immediately.
- Leftovers should be used within three to four days.
- Keep cold food cold using ice trays. Cold items should remain below 40°F.

4 Simple Steps to Food Safety:



<https://www.cdc.gov/foodsafety/keep-food-safe.html>

Resources:

- [Cooking for Groups: A Volunteer's Guide to Food Safety](#)
- [CDC Foodborne Illness](#)
- [CDC Food Safety Tips for your Holiday Turkey](#)
- [CDC Holiday Food Safety Scenarios](#)
- [FoodSafety.gov Winter Holidays](#)
- [FoodSafety.gov Ask Karen: Your Food Safety Expert](#)
- [USDA Holiday Food Safety Tips](#)
- [FDA Food Safety Tips for Healthy Holidays](#)

Use FoodSafetyKansas.org to Report Food Complaints

The Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) and the Kansas Department of Agriculture (KDA) launched FoodSafetyKansas.org in 2017. It can be used to submit food-related illness (food poisoning) complaints regarding restaurants, events like wedding receptions or potlucks, or food items purchased at a grocery or convenience store. It can also be used to submit complaints about food establishments that did not cause an illness, such as observed problems with pests or lack of employee handwashing.

KDA handles complaints that do not involve illness and performs inspections of all restaurants for which a complaint was submitted. KDHE processes illness complaints and begins an outbreak investigation if the complaint involves multiple people from multiple households, and those people have nothing else in common that could have caused their illnesses.

When local health department staff receive food-related complaints, they may access FoodSafetyKansas.org to file the complaint or direct the complainant to self-report via the website. KDHE and KDA will receive a notification that the complaint has been filed and investigate as needed.



The screenshot shows the 'Food Safety Kansas' website interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the text 'Food Safety Kansas' on the left, a photo of a chef in a kitchen in the center, and a photo of various fresh fruits and vegetables on the right. Below the navigation bar is a main heading: 'Report a food-related illness or complaint'. Under this heading are three bullet points: 'Did you get sick from something you ate?', 'Did you attend an event where people became ill?', and 'Is there a problem with a restaurant you visited or food item you purchased?'. Below the bullet points is a paragraph: 'Kansas Department of Health & Environment and Kansas Department of Agriculture work cooperatively to investigate foodborne illness outbreaks.' The page is divided into two columns. The left column, with a yellow background, is for reporting illness caused by a restaurant, food item, or event. It provides the phone number 877-427-7317 and a 'File an Online Report' button. The right column, with a grey background, is for reporting a problem with a restaurant or food that did NOT cause illness. It provides an email address kda.fsl@ks.gov and a phone number 785-564-6767, along with a 'File an Online Report' button.

Kansas Disease Investigation Guideline Updates

The following updates occurred to the disease investigation guidelines this month.

- Creation of three new guidelines: Coccidioidomycosis, Histoplasmosis, and Leptospirosis.
- Revision of the Hepatitis A Disease Investigation Guideline and fact sheet using the “**Recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices for Use of Hepatitis A Vaccine for Postexposure Prophylaxis and for Preexposure Prophylaxis for International Travel**” (MMWR 2018;67:1216–1220).

These new and revised guidelines can be found at www.kdheks.gov/epi/disease_investigation_guidelines.htm.



UPDATE EPITRAX DATA QUALITY INDICATORS

by Sheri Tubach, MPH MS

The Bureau of Epidemiology and Public Health Informatics has implemented a set of monthly quality indicators and performance measures to encourage data quality improvement in EpiTrax and timeliness of investigations. I am now calculating the performance measures of interview attempt and interview completion using either the report date to the LHD or the date the event was created in EpiTrax. The disease specific targets for interview initiation and interview completion can be found below. I hope that these performance measures will be more helpful in prioritizing case investigations.

October 2018	State's Total Number of Cases* = 339	
EpiTrax Indicators		
EpiTrax Field	Number of Cases with Field Completed	Percent Completed
Address City	333	98
Address County	339	100
Address Zip	331	98
Date of Birth	335	99
Died	302	89
Ethnicity†	280	83
Hospitalized	303	89
Occupation	198	58
Onset Date	254	75
Pregnancy††	123	77
Race †	293	86
Sex †	337	99
Persons Interviewed	211	62
Persons Lost to Follow-Up	35	10
Persons Refused Interview	3	1
Persons Not Interviewed	90	27
	Number of Cases	Percent of Cases
Interview was attempted within the target for each disease ^{^52}	166	50
Case investigations were completed within the target for each disease [^]	134	41

*Calculations do not include Hepatitis B - chronic, Hepatitis C – Chronic or acute, or Animal Rabies

** Out-of-state, discarded, deleted or those deemed to be not a case are not included in this calculation.

† Unknown considered incomplete.

†† Pregnancy completeness calculated on females only

^ See the table below for interview attempt and completed case interview targets



Disease Targets

Diseases	Disease Control (Days)*	Completed Case Investigation (Days)**
Anthrax; Botulism; Brucellosis; Cholera; Diphtheria; Hantavirus Pulmonary Syndrome; Hepatitis A; Influenza deaths in children <18 years of age; Measles; Meningitis, bacterial; Meningococemia; Mumps; Plague; Poliomyelitis; Q Fever; Rabies, human; Rubella; Severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS); Smallpox; Tetanus; Tularemia; Viral hemorrhagic fever; Yellow fever	1	3
Varicella	1	5
Pertussis	1	14
Campylobacter infections; Cryptosporidiosis; Cyclospora infection; Giardiasis; Hemolytic uremic syndrome, post diarrheal; Hepatitis B, acute; Legionellosis; Listeriosis; Salmonellosis, including typhoid fever; Shigellosis; Shiga-toxin Escherichia coli (STEC); Trichinosis; Vibriosis (not cholera)	3	5
Arboviral disease (including West Nile virus, Chikungunya, and Dengue); Haemophilus influenzae, invasive disease; Streptococcus pneumoniae, invasive	3	7
Ehrlichiosis / Anaplasmosis; Lyme disease; Malaria; Spotted Fever Rickettsiosis	3	14
Hepatitis B, chronic; Hepatitis C, chronic; Hepatitis C, acute; Leprosy (Hansen disease); Psittacosis; Streptococcal invasive, drug-resistant disease from Group A Streptococcus; Toxic shock syndrome, streptococcal and staphylococcal; Transmissible spongiform encephalopathy (TSE) or prion disease	N/A	N/A

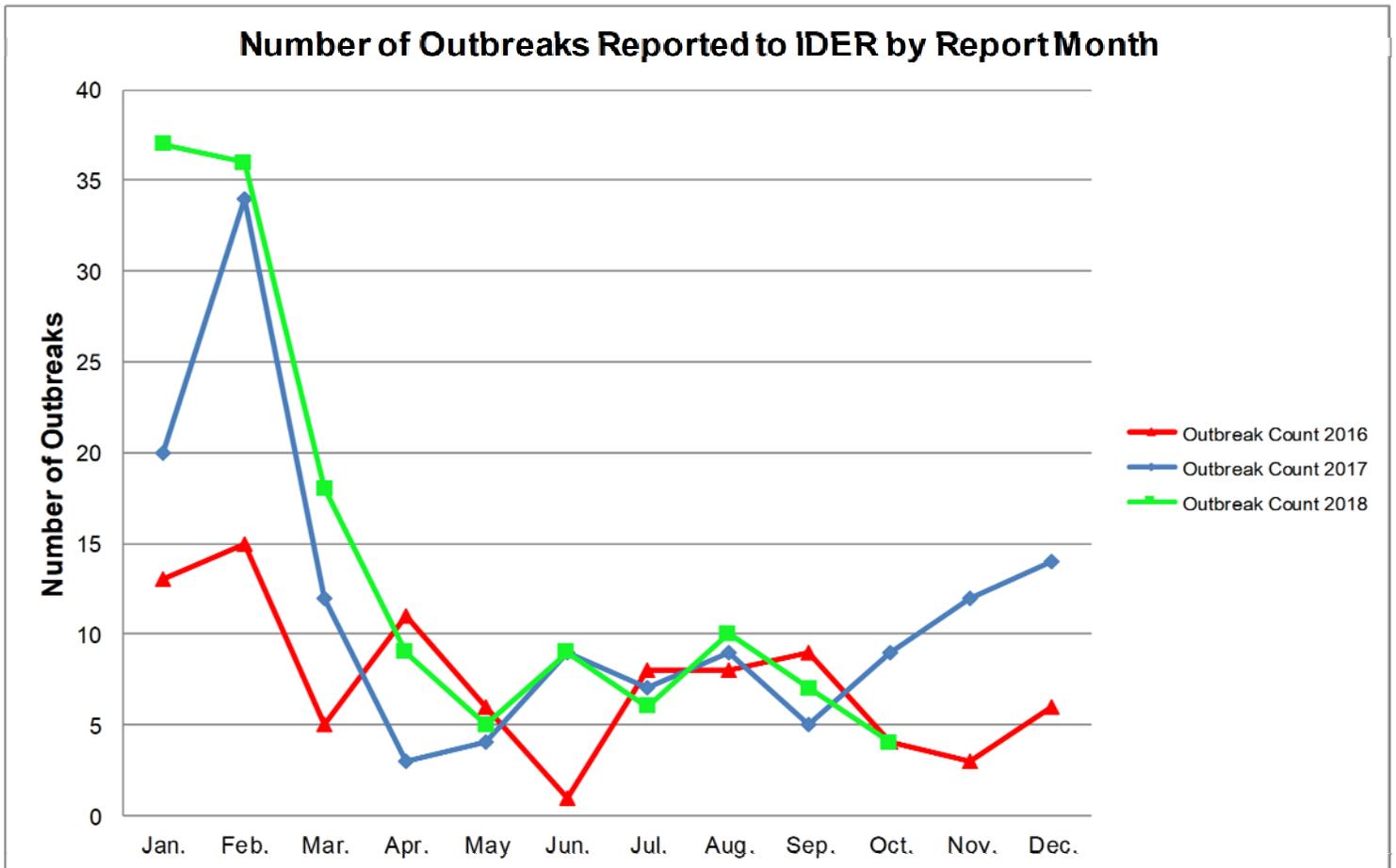
Monthly Disease Counts

Please refer to the Cumulative Case Reports of Diseases ([http://www.kdheks.gov/epi case reports by county.htm](http://www.kdheks.gov/epi%20case%20reports%20by%20county.htm)) for current case count information.

***Disease Control:** Calculated by using EpiTrax Fields: **(Date LHD Investigation Started) OR (Call Attempt 1 date for Salmonellosis and STEC) - (Date Reported to Public Health) OR (Date Reported to KDHE)**

****Completed Case Investigation:** Calculated by using EpiTrax fields: **(Date LHD Investigation Completed) - (Date Reported to Public Health) OR (Date Reported to KDHE)**

Outbreaks Report



Date Reported	Facility Type	Transmission/Exposure	Disease/Condition	County
10/5/2018	Restaurant	Food	Unknown Etiology	Shawnee
10/11/2018	Fair or festival	Animal Contact	Campylobacteriosis	Reno
10/17/2018	Restaurant	Food	Unknown Etiology	Sedgwick
10/21/2018	Restaurant	Food	Unknown Etiology	Sumner