



FOOD SAFETY ADVISORY REGARDING PORK - 8/7/2015

There is a current outbreak of Salmonella illnesses around our state that may be linked to pork products. The ongoing outbreak is under investigation by local, state, and federal public health officials. Here is some helpful information to help protect you, your employees, and your customers.

What is Salmonella?

Salmonella is a bacteria that can be found in either live animals or raw pork, beef or poultry. Salmonellosis, the illness caused by infection with *Salmonella*, can cause severe and even bloody diarrhea, fever, chills, abdominal discomfort, and vomiting. Serious bloodstream infections may also occur.

Where did this outbreak come from?

No specific source has been found yet, but officials are investigating an apparent link to pork. The likely source of exposure for some of the ill people appears to have been whole roasted pigs, cooked and served at private events. In addition, food establishments that butcher whole hogs for cuts of pork are a concern as a source of illness. Public health officials are investigating and working to get more specific information.

What can I do?

Cross-contamination and improper final cooking temperatures are the main risks. Pay close attention to food safety to ensure that your business does not cause customers to become sick. Please review the guidelines below, as well as sharing them with your employees.

- Wash your hands thoroughly after handling raw animal foods (pork, beef or poultry).
- Immediately clean and sanitize all equipment and surfaces that have come into contact with raw animal foods. Use three steps: wash, rinse and sanitize.
- Thoroughly clean and sanitize equipment before handling a different kind of meat.
- Set up a separate sanitizer bucket for wiping cloths used for surfaces in contact with raw animal food.
- Clean and sanitize sink after thawing or rinsing raw animal foods.
- Store raw animal foods below and away from all other foods and keep different kinds of raw animal meat separate.
- Thoroughly cook raw animal foods. Use a digital food thermometer to check temperatures. Pork roasts need to be cooked to at least 145°F for 4 minutes (holding time may include postoven heat rise). Ground pork products need to be cooked to at least 155°F for 15 seconds.
- Ensure that all food is maintained at proper temperatures. Keep cold food at 41° F or below and hot food at 135° F or above.
- Food workers must not work if they are vomiting or have diarrhea. Workers must stay home for at least a full 24 hours after getting better.

For more information, please see the news release from the Department of Health website (<http://www.doh.wa.gov/Newsroom/15144SalmonellaPorkIllnesses>) or contact Whatcom County Health Department at (360) 676-6724.

**Remember to always report suspected foodborne illnesses to
Whatcom County Health Department at (360) 676-6724.**