

Lesson 3:

Chapter 1 Module 3

What To Do in Case of Illness

Chapter 1: The Importance of Food Safety throughout your Food Service Establishment

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Chapter 1 – Module 3: What To Do in Case of Illness

WHAT TO DO IN CASE OF ILLNESS

Key Words:

- Illness
- Symptoms
- Foodborne Illness
- Norovirus
- Food Allergy Reaction
- Jaundice

Main Ideas:

- Restaurant employees can spread bacteria and viruses to food
- Customers can transfer viruses to food in the restaurant, especially self-serve
- Food allergy reactions can be immediate or take hours to develop
- Always call 911 if you suspect a food allergy reaction

Employee Illness

Restaurant employees who are ill can spread viruses or bacteria to foods. Customers who eat these foods can then become sick.

Employees who have the following symptoms should **not** report for work at a restaurant:

- ✗ Vomiting
- ✗ Diarrhea
- ✗ Sore Throat
- ✗ Fever
- ✗ Jaundice (yellowing of eyes and skin, which may be caused by the Hepatitis A virus)
- ✗ Infected cut or boil (cover with bandage; wear a disposable glove if the cut is on the hand)

Vomiting, Diarrhea, Sore Throat, Fever

Employees should not return to work until at least 24 hours after vomiting and diarrhea have stopped and they no longer have a fever. If vomiting or diarrhea occurs in the middle of a work shift, employees should go home after notifying your manager or supervisor.



Jaundice

Employees with jaundice should see a doctor. Hepatitis A is a serious condition that could last for several weeks and can easily be spread to many customers.

Infected Cut or Boil

Employees should cover the infected part of the body with a bandage. If the cut is on the hand, they should also wear a disposable glove.

Bacteria and viruses can easily spread from ill employees to food. Bacteria also can be easily spread to food from employees with infected cuts or boils. Improper handling of contaminated foods cause bacteria to grow and some form toxins, all with potentially harmful consequences.

One illness can cause many people to become sick.

Scenario 3: Outbreak Causes Restaurant Closing

A teenager who ate chicken and vegetable fajitas at a Mexican restaurant was among 200 people in a Michigan community to become ill with Norovirus infection. Symptoms of the illness included nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, headache, fever, chills, and weakness. The restaurant voluntarily closed its doors after the county health department identified their operation as the source of the Norovirus outbreak.



There are numerous ways to prevent illnesses, like Norovirus, from spreading:

- ✓ Wash hands often with soap and water; hand sanitizers can also be used, but should never take the place of handwashing
- ✓ Fruits and vegetables should be washed before preparing them
- ✓ Oysters and other shellfish should be cooked thoroughly
- ✓ Clean and sanitize surfaces
- ✓ Restaurant employees should not handle food when they are ill
- ✓ Promptly wash dirty laundry in hot water and machine dry, including aprons, towels, tablecloths, and napkins

Customer Illness

Protecting Food from Customers Who Are Ill

Customers who come to a restaurant may already be ill with a virus that could be spread to other customers. Self-service areas such as buffets and salad bars can be protected from ill customers by installing sneeze guards to protect the food.

- Sneeze guards should be located 14 inches above the counter and extend for at least 7 inches. This will prevent customers from coughing or sneezing on the food.
- Handles of utensils used by customers to portion foods on a self-serve buffet or salad bar should be wiped with a sanitizing solution frequently.



Cleaning Up from Ill Customers

Customers may become ill at the restaurant with vomiting or diarrhea that can then carry viruses or bacteria to other customers or employees. Remember, when cleaning up after an ill customer:

- ✓ Vomiting and diarrhea must be cleaned up quickly
- ✓ Employee should wear gloves and use a sanitizing solution
- ✓ Employee clothes that become soiled during the cleaning process should be removed immediately and laundered with hot water and detergent

Customer Reports of Illness



Customers who become ill from a bacteria or viruses spread from food usually do not have symptoms until after they have left the restaurant. Often times, symptoms can occur eight or more hours after eating a food. Therefore, when a customer thinks food from a restaurant caused their foodborne illness, the customer will usually contact the restaurant at a later time to report the illness.

- Be sure you know your restaurant's policy on handling complaints, including reports of foodborne illness. One shift member should handle customer complaints, often a manager, supervisor, or head chef.
- Refer possible foodborne illness complaints to your manager, supervisor, or head chef immediately.

Customers with Allergic Reactions to Food

Customers who become ill from an allergic reaction to a food often have symptoms starting within minutes of ingesting the food. These can include (but are not limited to) difficulty breathing and swelling of the face, lips, mouth, throat, or tongue. Immediate medical help is needed. In some cases, an allergic reaction can lead to death.



A restaurant employee who thinks a customer is having an allergic reaction to food should **call 911 to request medical help right away** and ask the customer to lay on the floor with their legs elevated. Even if the customer has an epinephrine injector (such as EpiPen®) available to lessen the symptoms of the allergic reaction, emergency medical help should still be called.

SAMPLE TELEPHONE CALL TO 911:

This is [name of caller] calling from [name of restaurant] located at [restaurant address]. We have a customer who is having an allergic reaction. Please send help right away.

(Remain on the phone and follow any additional instructions provided by the emergency operator.)

[View Video linked from Chapter 1 Module 3.](#)

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What To Do in Case of Illness

Module Quiz: Please make sure you have read Chapter 1 – Module 3 and watched the corresponding video before you take the quiz. If you have any questions about the information found in Module 3, please ask your manager before you begin.

1. Restaurant workers who are ill can spread viruses or bacteria to foods, and this can cause customers who eat the food to become ill.
 - a. True
 - b. False

2. Dan is working in the restaurant kitchen when he suddenly becomes sick with diarrhea. What should Dan do?
 - a. Complete his work shift
 - b. Tell the manager and go home right away
 - c. Ask to change jobs for the remainder of the shift
 - d. Finish working through the lunch rush and then notify his supervisor

3. What virus(es) spread by food can cause jaundice with symptoms of yellow skin and eyes?
 - a. Norovirus
 - b. Hepatitis A
 - c. Stomach flu
 - d. All of the above

4. When Randy, a restaurant cook, gets up in the morning he realizes that he has a very sore throat and fever. The restaurant where Randy works serves many elderly customers. What should Randy do?
 - a. Report for work and tell the manager as soon as the manager arrives
 - b. Call the manager to say he is sick and not coming to work
 - c. Report for work as usual because he does not have sick leave and needs the money
 - d. Report for work as usual and stay on shift until a substitute can be found

5. What is the purpose of sneeze guards on salad bars?
 - a. Prevent customers from taking too much food
 - b. Prevent customers from spreading germs to food by coughing or sneezing
 - c. Make the salad bar look more attractive
 - d. Speed customers through the salad bar line

6. A customer vomited on the bathroom floor of your restaurant during dinner hour. What should be done?
 - a. A worker should immediately clean up the mess using water and a mop.
 - b. Workers should clean up the mess when they have spare time.
 - c. A worker should immediately clean up the mess while wearing gloves and using a sanitizing solution.
 - d. Ignore the problem until the dinner hour is over.

7. Customers who become ill from bacteria or viruses contained in food may not have symptoms until 8 to 12 hours after consuming the food.
 - a. True
 - b. False

8. A customer says, "I think I'm having an allergic reaction." What should wait staff do first?
 - a. Administer CPR (cardio-pulmonary resuscitation).
 - b. Ask the customer what foods he has eaten.
 - c. Call 911 to request emergency help and tell the customer to lie on the floor and elevate his legs.
 - d. Go to a nearby pharmacy to get an EpiPen®.

9. When a restaurant worker answers the phone, a customer says, "I think I got sick from something I ate at your restaurant." What should the employee do or say?
 - a. Refer the customer to the manager, supervisor, or head chef immediately
 - b. Say, "We only serve good food here. I don't think our food caused the problem."
 - c. Ask, "What did you have to eat?"
 - d. Say, "I think you should see a doctor right away."