



(260) 449-7561

*The Fort Wayne-AlLEN County Department of Health would like to take this opportunity to provide some relevant and timely information to all food establishments in Allen County. We hope you find it to be a beneficial reminder of the importance of illness/symptom monitoring and encourage you to visit our website for additional information. Thank you in advance for taking the time to read through the following information. As always, if we can be of any assistance to you or your staff in your food protection efforts, do not hesitate to let us know.*

## **Employee Health and Infection Control**

Ill food handlers have the ability to transmit harmful communicable diseases through food products. For this reason, sections 120 through 127 of 410 IAC 7-24 (the Indiana Food Code) address the issue of employee health and list the responsibilities of both the food handler and the person-in-charge concerning employee health and the prevention of the spread of infection. (NOTE: Consult 410 IAC 7-24 sections 120-127 for more detailed information).

### **Food Handler Responsibilities**

Food employees are required to report to the person-in-charge if they are experiencing symptoms such as:

- 1) Acute gastrointestinal illness:
  - Diarrhea
  - Fever
  - Vomiting
  - Jaundice; or
  - Sore Throat with fever
- 2) Lesions containing pus, such as a boil or infected wound that is open or draining on their hands, wrist, exposed portions of the arms, or other parts of the body.
- 3) If diagnosed with one of the following five infectious agents:
  - Salmonella spp.
  - Shigella spp.
  - Shiga toxin-producing Escherichia coli
  - Hepatitis A virus
  - Norovirus
- 4) Had a past illness from one of the above five infectious agents.
- 5) Being suspected of causing or being exposed to a confirmed disease outbreak caused by one of the above five infectious agents because the food employee:
  - Prepared the food implicated in the outbreak;
  - Consumed the food implicated in the outbreak;
  - Consumed food at the event prepared by a person who is infected or ill with the infectious agent that caused the outbreak or who is suspected of being a shedder of the infectious agent.
- 6) Living in household with person diagnosed with one of the above five illnesses.



### **Person-in-Charge Responsibilities**

- 1) The person-in-charge shall educate food handlers of the responsibility to report to the person-in-charge if experiencing any of the above symptoms or diagnosis. The person-in-charge should monitor employee's physical condition for symptoms.
- 2) The person-in-charge shall **exclude** food handlers experiencing vomiting, diarrhea, onset of jaundice in last 7 days, or who has been diagnosed with one of the above five infectious agents.
- 3) The person-in-charge shall **restrict** food handlers experiencing sore throat with fever, uncovered lesions containing pus, or positive specimen culture of Salmonella, Shigella, Shiga toxin-producing Escherichia coli, or

Norovirus, but no symptoms of acute gastroenteritis illness. NOTE: If serving a highly susceptible population, the food handler must be excluded.

4) Assure that proper handwashing procedures are followed by food handlers and no bare hand contact with ready-to-eat foods due to the ability to be transmitted by a fecal-oral contamination route.

## **Restriction and Exclusion definitions**

### **Exclusion** means...

A food employee is not allowed in any part of the food establishment where there is a possibility of transmitting the pathogen via food or person-to-person contact.

### **Restriction** means...

- The food employee is limited to duties which do not bring him or her into contact with ready-to-eat foods, or;
- Exposed food; clean equipment, utensils, and linens; unwrapped single service and single-use articles.

## **Food Handlers may be Released from Restriction or Exclusion if:**

- They are free of vomiting and/or diarrhea for at least 24 hours not attributable to another non-infectious condition.
- They are free of sore throat with fever and no foodborne illness occurred that may have been caused by the restricted person.
- They provide written medical documentation that chronic non-infectious agent such as Crohn's disease, irritable bowel syndrome, etc., was the cause of vomiting and/or diarrhea.
- In the case of Hepatitis A—at least 7 days have passed since the onset of jaundice or at least 14 days have passed since the onset of symptoms if no jaundice occurred.
- They provide written medical documentation or release from the regulatory authority for Salmonella, Shigella, or Shiga toxin-producing Escherichia coli following at least 2 consecutive negative stool samples at least 48 hours after discontinuation of antibiotics and at least 24 hours apart. If diagnosed with Salmonella typhi; following at least three negative consecutive stool specimen cultures not earlier than one month after onset, at least 48 hours after discontinuance of antibiotics and at least 24 hours apart.

## **Protect Food Handlers and the Consumer.**

It is strongly recommended that each establishment have a written Employee Health Policy that is routinely reviewed with all food handlers. It is important for food handlers to know what symptoms are associated with these illnesses and their responsibilities to report, exclude, or be restricted from food service. Education and open lines of communication are essential in being successful in this regard.

### ***Remember--***

- Know the common symptoms of illnesses that can be transmitted from the food handler to food and then ultimately to consumer.
- Practice and know the proper method of handwashing to minimize the potential of cross contamination as well as the fecal-oral contamination route of the illnesses caused by these infectious agents.
- As an employee engaging in food handling, we urge you to know and exercise your responsibilities to report illnesses or to restrict or exclude infected or symptomatic food handlers,.
- If you are sick, stay home.

***By practicing and enforcing these provisions in the Indiana Food Code (as well as consistent handwashing), we can all work together to protect the health of our community! Thank you for your continued efforts in this regard.***

