



Filing a Food-Related Complaint

If you would like to notify the Department of Health of a food-related complaint, it's as easy as 1, 2, 3!

General Complaints

For submitting a general complaint about unsafe food handling practices at a food establishment, follow these steps:

1. Call the Department of Health Food & Consumer Protection line at (260) 449-7562 or go online to www.allencountyhealth.com.
2. Provide as much information as possible
 - Name and location of establishment
 - Day and time of visit
 - Nature of complaint (i.e. employee did not wash hands, bare hand contact with ready to eat food, foreign object in your food)
 - Steps taken (if any) by management to correct the issue
3. Expect a call from a Department of Health food inspector to let you know of the results of the investigation*

Illness Complaints

If you think you may have gotten ill as a result of unsafe food handling practices or a contaminated food product, it is important you let us know as quickly as possible so we can investigate the complaint to the fullest extent possible.

To submit an illness complaint, follow these steps:

1. Call the Department of Health Food & Consumer Protection line at (260) 449-7562 or go online to www.allencountyhealth.com.
2. Provide as much information as possible
 - Name and location of establishment
 - Day and time of visit
 - Food items you ate, including drinks consumed
 - Did you alert management?
 - Did you contact a physician?
 - If so, did you submit a stool sample?
 - How soon after consumption did you become ill?
 - What were your symptoms?
 - Did anyone else who ate with you become ill?
3. Expect a call from a Department of Health food inspector to let you know of the results of the investigation*

*You can leave your name or remain anonymous. If you choose to leave your name with the complaint, we will call you back and share our inspection results with you. We typically follow up on complaints within 24 business hours.

More about Food-Related Illnesses

When people get sick with diarrhea or vomiting, they often describe it as “food poisoning” or “stomach flu.” Sometimes it truly is caused by something you ate and sometimes it is not. Because these symptoms can be caused by many types of viruses and bacteria in our environment, it can be hard to know for sure. Most people will recover from these illnesses after a day or two with no serious consequences.

Common symptoms of a food-related illness:

- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Stomach cramping
- Fever or chills
- Muscle aches or fatigue

Questions to consider when making an illness complaint:

- Did any of the food items look, smell or taste funny?
- Did anyone else from your party become ill?
- How long after you ate did you become ill? Most people tend to blame illness on the last place they ate. Foodborne illness can occur anywhere from 6 to 72 hours depending on the type of infectious agent.
- Do you still have any food samples left? In some cases, we have the ability to send food samples to the Indiana State Department of Health for further analysis.
- Did you attend some sort of an event or gathering that could possibly be the source of the illness versus a food establishment?

Advice for preventing the spread of food-related illnesses:

- Wash your hands with soap and water often
- Wash fruits and vegetables before eating them
- Cook foods to the proper temperature
- Keep countertops and other food preparation areas clean
- Do not prepare food when sick

If you are in doubt, call the Department of Health at (260) 449-7562 and ask to speak to a food inspector.