# CDC and Food Safety

"I am the one asking you—on behalf of myself, my family, and the 1500 others who were sickened—please make our food system safe."

—Testimony from the congressional hearing, "The Outbreak of *Salmonella* in Eggs," held September 22, 2010

**Each year, 1 in 6 Americans gets sick from and 3,000 die of foodborne diseases. Reducing foodborne illness by 10% would keep 5 million Americans from getting sick each year. Preventing a single fatal case of *E. coli* O157 infection would save an estimated $7 million.**

## What is CDC's role in food safety?

Food safety depends on strong partnerships. CDC and the regulatory agencies the Food and Drug Administration [FDA] and the US Department of Agriculture's Food Safety and Inspection Service [FSIS] play complementary roles in the federal food safety effort. State and local health departments and food industries also play critical roles in all aspects of food safety.

CDC provides the vital link between illness in people and the food safety systems of government agencies and food producers.

**CDC does this by:**

**Monitoring** human illness—
Tracking the occurrence of foodborne diseases

**Defining the public health burden** of foodborne illness

**Attributing illness** to specific foods and settings

**Investigating** outbreaks and sporadic cases—
Managing the DNA "fingerprinting" network for foodborne illness-causing germs in all states to detect outbreaks

**Empowering** state and local health departments

**Targeting** prevention measures to meet long-term food safety goals

**Informing** food safety action and policy—The new Food Safety Modernization Act and the egg safety regulation were driven in part by CDC data and investigative findings.

## Current food safety challenges

Challenges to food safety will continue to arise in unpredictable ways, largely due to:

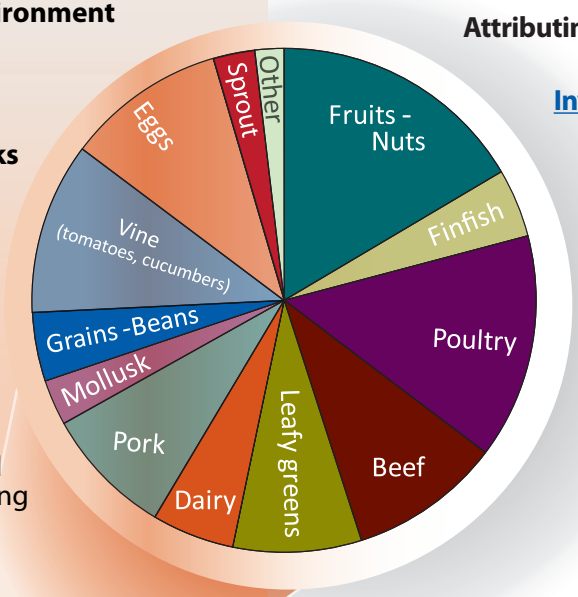
**Changes in our food production and supply**

**Changes in the environment** leading to food contamination

**Rising number of multistate outbreaks**

**New and emerging germs**, toxins, and antibiotic resistance

**New and different contaminated foods,** such as prepackaged raw cookie dough, bagged spinach, and peanut butter, causing illness




**Total foodborne outbreak-associated illnesses, 2008–2012= 81,757**

Source: CDC National Outbreak Reporting System, 2008-2012.

National Center for Emerging and Zoonotic Infectious Diseases
Division of Foodborne; Waterborne; and Environmental Diseases

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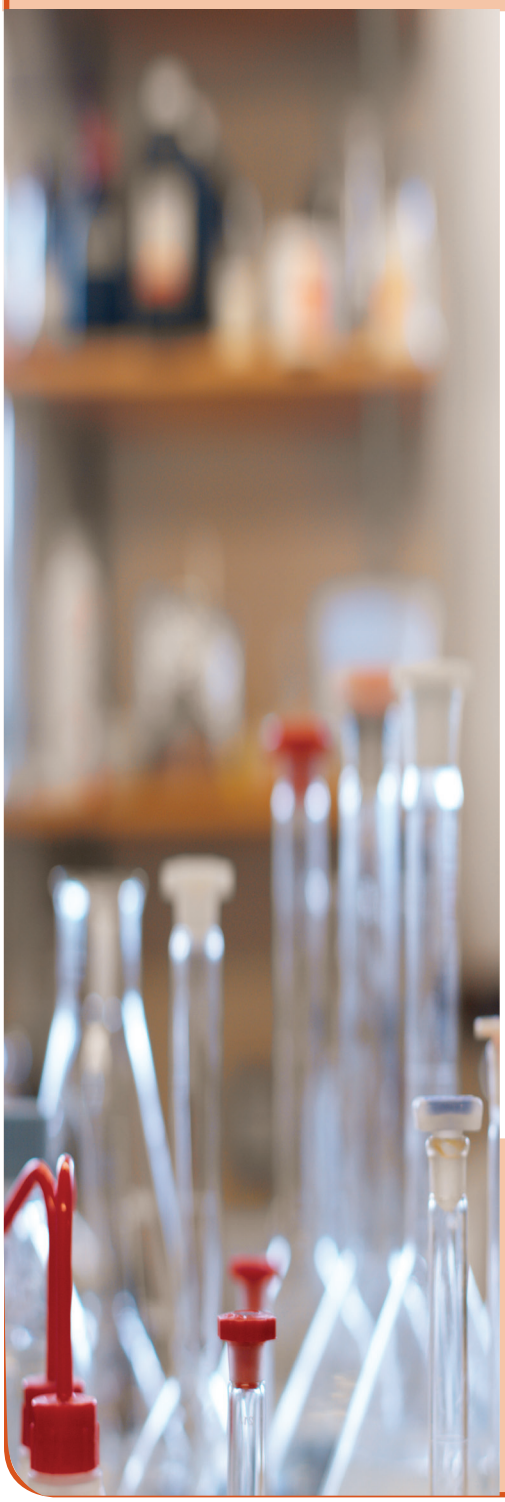
# Food safety: a global concern

**Every year, we eat more imported food. Protecting our food supply requires a global effort and effective food safety systems in the United States and other countries.** Food sleuths at CDC and its partners across the country solved the mystery of a *2012 multistate outbreak of Salmonella infections* that sickened 425 people in 28 states. Prompted by reports of an unusual cluster of cases, public health investigators used *DNA "fingerprinting"* to quickly identify two strains of the bacteria, *Salmonella* Bareilly and *Salmonella* Nchanga. *Disease detectives and environmental health specialists* pinpointed frozen raw, scraped ground tuna imported from India as the likely source of contamination. Staff from the Food and Drug Administration office in India traced the product to a seafood processing plant. The imported product was *recalled*, which likely prevented additional illnesses. This was the first documented outbreak of human salmonellosis linked to raw, scraped tuna product in the US. This was also the first foodborne outbreak of *Salmonella* Nchanga reported in the US.

Photo: Bags of raw ground, scraped tuna product imported from India



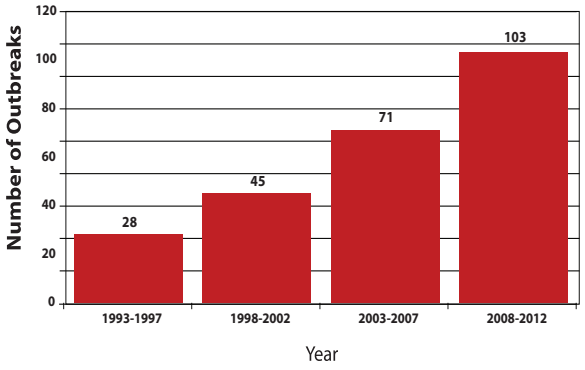
## Winnable battles in food safety

- **Decrease *Salmonella* and other food-related infections**
- **Accelerate the public health response to foodborne illness at the local, national, and global levels**

**We're taking action:**

- **Discovery**—Tracking trends and risk factors, defining the burden, finding new pathogens and drug resistance, and attributing illness to specific foods
- **Innovation**—Developing new tools, methods, and analytics in epidemiology, laboratory science, and environmental health
- **Implementation**—Sharing new technology and information with local, state, and federal partners; improving communications with the public health community, industry, and consumers; and targeting information to guide policy

### Multistate foodborne outbreaks, 1993–2012




Source: CDC National Outbreak Reporting System, 2008-2012.

**What's next:**

- Centers that are faster at responding to foodborne outbreaks
- More effective methods in public health laboratories to quickly identify, characterize, and fingerprint *Salmonella* and other food-related pathogens
- Improved integration of foodborne illness surveillance systems and expanded data sharing as called for in the new food safety bill

### Germs (and some foods) responsible for most foodborne illnesses:

- *Campylobacter* (poultry, raw milk)
- *E. coli* O157 (ground beef, leafy greens, raw milk)
- *Listeria* (deli meats, unpasteurized soft cheeses, produce)
- *Salmonella* (eggs, poultry, meat, produce)
- *Vibrio* (raw oysters)
- Norovirus in many foods (sandwiches, salads)
- *Toxoplasma* (meats)