



# LOCAL HEALTH DEPARTMENT

## Essential partner for healthy schools



By working with schools, local health departments can promote food safety and handwashing, and help contain a foodborne illness outbreak if one occurs—possibly keeping more students and staff from becoming sick. It is critical that staff from local health departments and schools establish a close relationship for maintaining healthy and safe schools. The Food-Safe Schools Action Guide urges health departments to follow these simple but critical recommendations. Details, tips, and resources to help implement each recommendation are outlined in the Action Guide's in-depth modules at [www.FoodSafeSchools.org](http://www.FoodSafeSchools.org).

1. Help schools improve their food safety policies and practices at the district and school building levels by providing science-based recommendations.
2. Serve as a resource for foodservice, teaching, nursing, and other school staff.
3. Implement federal, state, and local food safety policies and practices in a proactive and timely manner.
4. Inspect and monitor schools at least twice a year to ensure that foodservice practices, equipment, and facilities are food-safe.
5. Address and resolve school food safety infractions.
6. Review and approve new or remodeled school food-service facilities.

### HEALTH DEPARTMENTS ARE ESSENTIAL TO FOOD-SAFE SCHOOLS

Health departments can:

- \* Assist schools with the development of food safety policies and procedures that help increase food safety behaviors among students and staff.
- \* Serve as an invaluable food safety resource and provide training for school staff.
- \* Conduct routine inspections to ensure schools are food-safe and suggest improvements to keep students and staff healthy and safe.
- \* Investigate suspected foodborne illness outbreaks and implement control measures to stop the spread of disease.



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ESSENTIAL PARTNER FOR HEALTHY SCHOOLS

7. Establish guidelines for when schools should contact local health departments about a suspected foodborne illness outbreak.
8. Investigate foodborne illness outbreaks in collaboration with school staff.
9. Assist schools with crisis communication in the event of a foodborne illness outbreak.
10. Develop a rapid communication response to foodborne illness outbreaks. Be prepared to respond in a timely manner to foodborne illness outbreaks.
11. Know how and when to report outbreaks to the state health department and to the appropriate federal agencies.
12. Stay informed of which foodborne illnesses must be reported to the state and national levels.

### BONUS RESOURCES

THE USDA NATIONAL AGRICULTURE LIBRARY MAINTAINS A SEARCHABLE DATABASE OF FOOD SAFETY EDUCATION MATERIALS AND CAN BE ACCESSED BY VISITING [WWW.NAL.USDA.GOV/FOODBORNE](http://WWW.NAL.USDA.GOV/FOODBORNE). EXPERT REVIEWS OF MANY OF THESE ITEMS HAVE BEEN PROVIDED BY THE NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION, IN COLLABORATION WITH CDC AND THE NATIONAL COALITION FOR FOOD-SAFE SCHOOLS, AND CAN BE FOUND BY VISITING [WWW.FOODSAFETYWEB.INFO/REVIEWS.ASP](http://WWW.FOODSAFETYWEB.INFO/REVIEWS.ASP). IN ADDITION, YOU CAN SUBSCRIBE TO USDA'S WEEKLY FOOD SAFETY AND INSPECTION SERVICE CONSTITUENT UPDATE AT [WWW.FSIS.USDA.GOV](http://WWW.FSIS.USDA.GOV). YOU CAN ALSO FIND SPECIFIC STATE REPORTING REQUIREMENTS AT THE COUNCIL OF STATE AND TERRITORIAL EPIDEMIOLOGISTS WEB SITE AT [WWW.CSTE.ORG](http://WWW.CSTE.ORG)

**LEARN MORE ABOUT YOUR ROLE** in ensuring a food-safe school and find useful tips and resources to help you implement these recommendations. Check out the special 'how to' section for local health department staff in the Food-Safe Schools Action Guide at [www.FoodSafeSchools.org/healthdepartment](http://www.FoodSafeSchools.org/healthdepartment).