Food Safety for Fruits and Vegetables Restaurant Safety Stats and Facts



FACTS

1. Cross-contamination can occur when fruits and vegetables come into contact with other foods, surfaces, or equipment that are contaminated with harmful bacteria. For example, if a cutting board that was used to cut raw meat is then used to chop vegetables without being properly sanitized, the vegetables can become contaminated with bacteria.
2. If fruits and vegetables are stored at temperatures that are too warm, bacteria can grow and cause foodborne illness.
3. If fruits and vegetables are not washed properly, they can still contain harmful bacteria that can cause illness.
4. If produce is washed or rinsed with contaminated water, it can become contaminated with harmful bacteria or viruses.
5. If fruits and vegetables are not properly washed or handled, pesticide residues can remain on the produce, which can pose a health risk to consumers.
6. Food workers who are sick or have recently been sick with certain illnesses, such as norovirus or hepatitis A, are a significant source of foodborne illness outbreaks in restaurants.
7. The majority of foodborne illness outbreaks in restaurants are caused by improper food handling, such as inadequate handwashing, cross-contamination, and improper storage of food.

STATS

US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reports that foodborne illness outbreaks linked to produce, including fruits and vegetables, have been increasing in recent years. According to the CDC, in 2018, there were 40 produce-associated outbreaks per year on average, resulting in over 3,000 illnesses, 100 hospitalizations, and 2 deaths annually. Cross-contamination and improper food handling were among the main causes of these outbreaks.

These outbreaks resulted in over 28,000 illnesses, 1,184 hospitalizations, and 37 deaths.

- Proper food handling and storage practices can significantly reduce the risk of foodborne illness in restaurants. However, a study published in the Journal of Food Protection found that only 34% of restaurant workers reported receiving food safety training within the past year.

- The economic costs of foodborne illness are also significant. A 2018 study by the USDA estimated that the annual cost of foodborne illness in the United States is $15.6 billion in direct medical costs and lost productivity.
- The CDC estimates that each year, 1 in 6 Americans (or 48 million people) get sick, 128,000 are hospitalized, and 3,000 die from foodborne illnesses.