

FACT OR MYTH?

Food can be risk-free.



MYTH. No. All food safety practices are focused on reducing, not eliminating, risks. Chances of contamination, regardless of how small, are always there.

We typically associate certain types of foodborne illness outbreaks with certain foods or environments, like cases of Salmonella and E. coli with raw or undercooked foods and norovirus with dense, crowded areas. But this doesn't mean foodborne illnesses never happen in unexpected foods or situations.



Pasteurization is one method introduced to help make dairy products and eggs safer. But in 1985, one of the largest outbreaks of *Salmonella* in U.S. history was linked to pasteurized milk. Over 1500 people in multiple states became ill from drinking store brand milk from Jewel Food Stores. Two people died, even though salmonella is rarely fatal.

The process of **canning** also helps kill bacteria. Because commercial canning operations must comply with canned food regulations and are invested in making sure their products are safe, getting foodborne

illness from canned goods is unlikely. Cases of botulism, caused by toxin-producing *Clostridium botulinum* bacteria, are more commonly linked to home-canned goods. Yet, 8 people in 3 states contracted botulism in 2007 from commercially canned chili sauce. Castleberry Food Company, the producer, issued a recall of the sauce. Inspection of the canning facility found deficiencies in the canning process that prevented the spores from being destroyed during sterilization.



Despite all of the precautions that are put in place to make our food safe, there is always at least a small risk of getting sick from any food. The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) collects data on the number of cases of foodborne illnesses each year, which shows how common types of illness-causing pathogens are in the U.S. The more common the pathogen, the higher the probability that you would get sick from it.

Top 5 Pathogens Causing Foodborne Illness

1. Norovirus
2. Salmonella
3. Clostridium perfringens
4. Campylobacter
5. Staphylococcus aureus

CDC, 2011