

# American Medical Association

Physicians dedicated to the health of America



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## **AMA AND U.S. GOVERNMENT RELEASE NEW FOODBORNE ILLNESS PHYSICIAN/PATIENT INFORMATION**

*Largest physicians' group and three federal agencies stress need to raise awareness of new and emerging food-related diseases*

Declaring that foodborne illness is a serious public health problem, the American Medical Association (AMA), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), and the USDA's Food Safety & Inspection Service (FSIS), today released a new physician/patient information kit.

"Diagnosis and Management of Foodborne Illness, A Primer for Physicians" is designed to update physicians and other medical personnel. It also contains concise patient information for physicians to distribute. More than 15,000 kits are available free to physicians, and the information is also available on line at [www.ama-assn.org/foodborne](http://www.ama-assn.org/foodborne).

"There are an estimated 76 million cases of foodborne illness each year, resulting in more than 5,000 deaths and 325,000 hospitalizations annually in the United States," said Dr. Art Liang, Director of Food Safety at CDC.

"While many foodborne illnesses, such as typhoid and cholera have faded, new and re-emerging ones have taken their place," said J. Edward Hill, MD, AMA Trustee. "We didn't even know *Cyclospora*, resistant *Salmonella*, and some strains of *E.coli* existed when many of today's practicing physicians were in medical school. Physicians are now hungry for good information on recognizing and treating food-related diseases. This information kit gives them the information they want and need."

The kit also contains concise, easy-to-understand patient information for physicians to distribute to their patients. It details four safe-food handling tips everyone should follow, as well as a chart of recommended cooking temperature for various foods.

"Food safety is everyone's responsibility," said FSIS Associate Administrator Margaret Glavin. "Physicians can play an enormous role in educating their patients – especially their at-risk populations – about preventing foodborne illness."

Young children, pregnant women, older adults, and those with weakened immune systems are at a higher risk for foodborne illness. Immune systems may be weakened by medical treatments, such as steroids or chemotherapy, or by conditions, such as AIDS, cancer or diabetes. Those suffering from liver disease, alcoholism, or increased stomach acidity due to gastric surgery or regular use of antacids are also at increased risk.

The entire primer, including the patient tips, and more information about foodborne illness can be found at the AMA's website at [www.ama-assn.org/foodborne](http://www.ama-assn.org/foodborne).

**For more information, please call:**

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