



**WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT  
of HEALTH SERVICES**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Feeling Sick? Report it Quick!**

### **DHS launches new tool letting people report suspected illnesses from food or water**

In time for the annual peak in norovirus cases and outbreaks, the Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) has launched a [new online tool](#) to encourage Wisconsinites to report food or water sickness when symptoms occur. The online questionnaire, which takes less than five minutes to complete, helps local health departments identify sources of contamination to prevent others from getting sick. This tool is especially important as cases of norovirus, the leading cause of vomiting and diarrhea, tends to spike in the winter.

"By using this tool, Wisconsinites can help other people in their community from getting sick and prevent outbreaks," said DHS State Health Officer Paula Tran. "Ingesting contaminated food and water may cause just a little stomach upset for some, for others it can lead to hospitalization and be life threatening. We're asking people - when you're feeling sick, report it quick."

Contaminated food or water can come from a variety of sources, including food from grocery stores or restaurants, or water from pools, lakes, or rivers. Certain bacteria, viruses, or parasites can cause vomiting and diarrhea. In Wisconsin and the United States, it is believed these illnesses are under-reported, since many people who are infected get better without seeing a doctor. This new online tool is just one way for public health professionals to learn about food and water related illnesses and outbreaks to help prevent others from getting sick too. This tool is not a substitute for health care, and people who are feeling sick should contact their health care provider.

The new tool is a simple questionnaire that asks for current symptoms, places recently visited, and food items recently eaten. The information is sent to local health departments that identify potential sources of illness. If additional information is needed, public health specialists may contact Wisconsinites who report their illness. All follow-up will remain confidential.

The launch of the new tool will be accompanied by a "Feeling Sick? Report it Quick!" message campaign which will share information and resources about prevention, symptoms of food or waterborne illness, and the reporting system through print materials and on social media.

To avoid food poisoning before it happens, here are a few tips:

- Wash hands and surfaces touched with food often.
- Keep raw meat, chicken, seafood, and eggs away from food that will not be cooked.
- Cook food to the [right temperature](#) to kill germs that can cause illness.
- Refrigerate food at 40 degrees Fahrenheit or colder within 1-2 hours of cooking.

Find more information on the [Report an Illness Caused by Food or Water webpage](#).

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