



# News Release

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## ***Salmonella* illness outbreak linked to pork expands**

**OLYMPIA** — The *Salmonella* outbreak linked to pork products has grown to 134 cases in 10 counties around the state. Consumers are advised to cook pork thoroughly.

The case count has continued to grow as state health officials work with Public Health — Seattle & King County along with other local, state, and federal partners on the disease investigation.

The federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) sent its team of “disease detectives” to the state to help. Investigators are interviewing the most recent cases and comparing information to early cases, which were first reported in the spring.

Disease investigators are searching for possible contamination and exposure sources from a wide range of possible venues, including restaurants, markets, slaughter facilities, and farms/ranches.

*Salmonella* bacteria are commonly found in animals used for food, and proper storage, handling, preparation, and cooking can help prevent the illness known as salmonellosis.

Most of the illnesses have been confirmed with the outbreak strain of *Salmonella* bacteria, and early testing shows a connection to a slaughter facility in Graham, WA. Samples were collected at Kapowsin Meats in Pierce County last week. Testing confirms the outbreak strain was present.

The business, which is regulated by the United States Department of Agriculture Food Safety and Inspection Service, has cooperated with the investigation. There may be other sources and disease investigators are searching for the origin of the *Salmonella* bacteria in the outbreak.

The 134 cases include residents of Clark (2), Cowlitz (1), Grays Harbor (1), King (84), Kitsap (1), Mason (2), Pierce (12), Snohomish (24), Thurston (2), and Yakima (5) counties.

Exposure for many of the ill people apparently was whole roasted pigs, served at private events and restaurants. State health officials have issued [guidance for cooking whole roasted pigs](#), with an emphasis on making sure the meat is cooked thoroughly. In addition to proper handling and

Salmonellosis outbreak grows

August 12, 2015

Page 2

preparation, thorough cooking can help prevent possible illness. A meat thermometer should be used to ensure an internal temperature of 145 degrees in the thickest cut of the meat.

[Salmonellosis, the illness caused by infection with \*Salmonella\*](#), can cause severe and even bloody diarrhea, fever, chills, abdominal discomfort, and vomiting. Serious bloodstream infections may also occur. Annually, 600-800 cases of salmonellosis are reported among Washington residents.

Proper food handling, preparation, and cooking are the best precautions to take to prevent illness. Following [food safety guidance](#) can help prevent food-borne illness. Health officials warn consumers to use a food thermometer to make sure all meats and fish are cooked to a safe internal temperature; [guidance can be found on the Department of Health website](#). Other food safety tips include washing hands thoroughly with soap and water before and after preparing food, especially raw meats.

To avoid cross-contamination, don't place cooked food on a plate that previously held raw meat of any kind. It's also important to wash and then sanitize cutting boards, knives, and countertops that come into contact with raw meat by using a solution of bleach water (1 teaspoon bleach per gallon of water) or antibacterial cleaner.

[Contact with live animals](#) — including pigs or other livestock at home, in petting zoos, at local fairs and elsewhere — can create exposure to *Salmonella* and other bacteria. Thorough hand washing after contact with live animals is an important tool in preventing the spread of disease.

The [Department of Health website](#) ([www.doh.wa.gov](http://www.doh.wa.gov)) is your source for *a healthy dose of information*. Also, [find us on Facebook](#) and [follow us on Twitter](#).

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