

# **Comments from the Inspector on Employee Health**

Food Safety Team, USAF School of Aerospace Medicine

One key factor in preventing foodborne illnesses is in protecting food from becoming contaminated by foodhandlers that are ill. There are many microorganisms that can be transmitted through food from foodhandlers to consumers, but four of them are especially important due to their high communicability and the severity of the illnesses that they cause. These microorganisms are: *Salmonella typhi*, *Shigella* spp., *Escheria coli* 0157:H7, and Hepatitis A. A foodhandler testing positive for one of these microorganisms, or who has a household member who did, must report it to his/her supervisor immediately. Guide 1 in Annex 7 of the Food Code, "Exclusions and Restrictions for Food Employees and Applicants," indicates which limitations must be placed on foodhandlers diagnosed with a disease caused by these organisms. Depending on what illness it is, whether or not the foodhandler has symptoms, and whether or not he or she works in a food facility serving a highly susceptible population (such as in a hospital), the foodhandler may be either excluded from working, or restricted from performing tasks that require contact with food or food-contact surfaces.

There are many illnesses that can be transmitted by food and cause illness. That is why foodhandlers must inform their supervisors if they are experiencing symptoms associated with gastrointestinal illnesses such as diarrhea, fever, vomiting, jaundice, or sore throat. Also, foodhandlers must cover any wounds and lesions on their body with a dry, tight-fitting, impermeable bandage. If the lesion is on the hands or wrists, they must also wear disposable gloves.

For more information, contact your base Public health office at 6-1225. Or contact the Food Safety Team at the USAF School of Aerospace Medicine (Brooks AFB, TX), at (210) 536-2058 –DSN 240-2058- or E-mail a message to [jose.diaz@mirage.brooks.af.mil](mailto:jose.diaz@mirage.brooks.af.mil)