

Food safety specialist says food poisoning cases underreported

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(Medical Xpress)—You've probably heard of norovirus, salmonella and E. coli, but would you know if you were sick with one of these foodborne illnesses? A Kansas State University food safety specialist says there are distinct symptoms for food poisoning and reporting them to your doctor is an important step in improving food safety.

"We really want to reduce the number of [foodborne illness outbreaks](#)," said Karen Blakeslee, extension specialist in food science and coordinator of the Rapid Response Center. "It's important to understand foodborne illness and its symptoms because the whole topic of foodborne illness is really underreported."

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 19,056 cases of infection were reported in 2013. However, Blakeslee says many people don't report getting sick from contaminated food because they don't realize they have [food poisoning](#). Symptoms of a foodborne illness are similar to those with other illnesses, such as vomiting, diarrhea, headache and fever, but there are some distinct symptoms of foodborne illness.

"Symptoms like double vision, dizziness, lethargy and dehydration are all symptoms specific to a foodborne illness," said Blakeslee.

It takes two or more people with similar symptoms to be considered a foodborne illness outbreak. Blakeslee says another challenge with decreasing the number of outbreaks is trying to determine the food that

was contaminated.

"It's not necessarily what you ate that day or the day before," she said.
"Some of the symptoms for the different kinds of bacteria may take up to a couple of weeks to occur, so that's why it makes it really hard to identify the cause of the outbreak."

If you do suspect you have food poisoning, Blakeslee says to see a doctor or call your local health department.

Provided by Kansas State University

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