The Big Five Foodborne Illnesses Information Sheet

**E. Coli**
**Overview:** A bacterium that can produce a deadly toxin and causes approximately 73,000 cases of foodborne illness each year in the U.S.; Sources: meat, especially undercooked or raw hamburger, produce and raw milk
**Incubation Period:** 3-4 days
**Symptoms:** Severe diarrhea, cramping, dehydration
**Prevention:** Cook implicated food to 155°F; wash hands properly & frequently; correctly wash, rinse & sanitize dishware

**Shigella**
**Overview:** Causes an estimated 300,000 cases of diarrhea illnesses. Poor hygiene causes *Shigella* to be easily passed from person to person. Sources: salads, milk and dairy products, and unclean water.
**Incubation Period:** 1-7 days
**Symptoms:** Diarrhea, fever, chills, and dehydration
**Prevention:** Wash hands frequently and properly, especially after using the restroom; wash vegetables thoroughly

**Hepatitis A**
**Overview:** Hepatitis A is a liver disease caused by the hepatitis A virus. Hepatitis A can affect anyone. In the United States, hepatitis A can occur in situations ranging from isolated cases of disease to widespread epidemics.
**Incubation Period:** 15-50 days
**Symptoms:** Jaundice, nausea, diarrhea, fever, fatigue, loss of appetite, cramps
**Prevention:** Wash hands frequently and properly, especially after using the restroom

**Salmonella**
**Overview:** Most common cause of foodborne deaths. Responsible for millions of cases of foodborne illness a year; Sources: raw and undercooked eggs, undercooked poultry and meat, dairy products, seafood, fruits and vegetables
**Incubation Period:** 5-72 hours
**Symptoms:** Nausea, vomiting, cramps, and fever
**Prevention:** Cook all food to proper temperatures; chill food rapidly; eliminate sources of cross contamination (i.e. proper meat storage, proper wash, rinse, and sanitize procedure)

**Norovirus**
**Overview:** This virus is the leading cause of diarrhea in the United States. Any food can be contaminated with norovirus if handled by someone who is infected with this virus. This virus is highly infectious.
**Incubation Period:** 6-48 hours
**Symptoms:** Nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, and cramps
**Prevention:** Wash hands frequently and properly, especially after using the restroom; obtain food from a reputable food source; and wash vegetables thoroughly.