

B. cereus Outbreak Response Guide

Bacillus cereus, often called *B. cereus*, is a group of spore-forming bacteria that produces toxins which causes illness. *B. cereus* can cause two forms of foodborne illness in humans: diarrheal type and vomiting type.



What are common signs and symptoms?

Signs and symptoms usually start 1 to 16 hours after exposure to the bacteria and usually last a day. Do not return to work until you are symptom-free for 24-72 hours without use of medications.



Diarrhea



Nausea & vomiting



Stomach pain

How can *B. cereus* spread in the kitchen?



Inadequate reheating of foods



Foods from unapproved sources



Improper & slow cooling of foods (in plastic containers, in large batches, & while covered)



Improper temperatures



Not washing hands with soap & hot water for 10-20 seconds

When *B. cereus* bacteria enters food, it produces heat-resistant spores. These bacterial spores can survive cooking and reheating and can make people sick when they eat the contaminated foods.

What foods are commonly associated with *B. cereus*?



Cooked rice & pasta



Soup



Cooked vegetables & reconstituted dried potatoes



Refried beans



Any foods an infected food handler touched

What to do if you think your restaurant has an outbreak?



Notify SNHD at outbreakresponse@snhd.org



Do not work while sick. Screen workers for illness before they clock in & send sick employees home immediately. Track & log employee illness, including vomiting & diarrheal incidents.



Maintain accurate food safety logs, including cooling logs, with documented corrective actions.



Deep clean & disinfect the kitchen & high-touch surfaces including door handles & restrooms.



Consider reducing menu or temporarily closing until the source of the illnesses is eliminated.