



# COMMUNICABLE DISEASE INVESTIGATION



**The Communicable Disease staff are Registered Nurses (RNs) that are licensed professionals with educational preparation in nursing science, specializing in infectious diseases and infection control.**

## **Information that must be collected through these interviews or surveys include**

- Symptoms
- Onset dates and times of symptoms
- Duration of symptoms
- Age
- Gender
- Common exposures
  - Foods eaten
  - Prepared either inside or outside of the home
  - Recreational activities
  - Travel
  - Group events
  - Exposure to pets or other animals

**The RNs obtain medical and exposure histories of those who are ill and those who are well. This is done through**

- Medical record review
- Phone interviews
- In-person interviews
- When there are large numbers of individuals involved, electronic surveys are developed by the Communicable Disease staff with the Epidemiology staff

## **Information is also obtained from**

- Schools
- Long-term care facilities
- Medical providers
- Medical record systems
- Existing surveillance systems
- Illinois Department of Public Health
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
- Other local health departments

**As more information becomes available, a follow-up interview may be necessary to confirm potential exposures that have been identified.**

**Stool specimens are collected from ill individuals to identify the cause of the illness, to identify all exposures through which the causative agent can be transmitted.**

**If food is a suspected source of the illness, a 72-hour food history is taken. Foodborne illness is often caused by a portion of food that was eaten hours or days before the onset of illness.**

**Stool specimens may be required from food establishment employees to determine if a food handler is associated with the spread of illness or to confirm whether a food handler may be limited in what work they can do or be required to stay out of work to prevent the spread of illness.**



**Medical records may be requested to help identify the pathogen for the illness and to better assess the severity of the illness.**

**Ill individuals are reminded to stay home when ill. Ill food handlers or employees who work in sensitive occupations will not be permitted to work to prevent the risk of further spread of illness.**



**Communicable Disease staff may recommend or require corrective actions to stop the spread of illness or to prevent future illness.**