



Handling Complaints

Complaints should be reviewed and investigated to determine the nature of the foodborne illness or injury. Complaints can come from many sources. It is important to know what questions to ask a complainant for follow-up investigation into the cause of the adulteration or misbranding.

“Do’s”	“Don’ts”
Take All Complaints Seriously - advise callers all complaints are treated with high priority.	Don’t be defensive or respond with unnecessary information, such as, “we’ve been in business for 10 years and have never received a complaint.”
Request Complainant Name and Contact Information – advise caller contact information is necessary for follow-up and investigation.	Don’t completely disregard calls from anonymous, unidentified persons.
Document the product name, date of purchase, lot code, and any other pertinent information from the product label.	Don’t tell caller “it’s not my problem” because the product was manufactured by another company. It’s too early to make that determination at this point in your investigation.
Describe any symptoms, date and time of complaint illness or injury. Listen carefully and document responses.	Don’t be dismissive or condescending. Calls to report illness or injury can lead to stressful situations.
Ask if the food was consumed by any other family or household member.	Don’t assume that only the caller consumed the food product.
Ask if complainant received medical treatment from a doctor and what was the diagnosis.	Don’t call health care providers without consultation with legal counsel. Health care providers may be restricted by privacy laws.



A food allergy can be life-threatening. For serious reactions, **call 911** or consult a doctor for urgent medical care.