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NEWS RELEASE

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Health Department Newsletter Debuts with Tips to Prevent Food Poisoning

CORVALLIS, Ore. – Based on national estimates, 1 out of 6 Benton County residents, or 15,000 people, will catch a foodborne illness each year. With bountiful farmers’ markets, healthy grocery stores, excellent restaurants, and talented home cooks, Benton County residents and visitors have many opportunities to enjoy great food. However, wherever there is food, there is also the small potential for foodborne illnesses. These illnesses are usually caused by a pathogen like bacteria, a virus, or a parasite, that has contaminated food or drink.

Fortunately, most cases of foodborne illness (commonly known as food poisoning) are mild, but as a result, only a small percentage of cases are actually reported to the medical community. On average, between 30 and 50 cases of food poisoning are reported each year.

The Benton County Health Department (BCHD) licenses all restaurants and mobile food stands in the county, trains food service workers in food safety, and investigates all reports of foodborne illness. BCHD also partners with restaurant operators and county residents who advise the department and the Board of Commissioners on food safety issues.

When cooking at home, BCHD recommends keeping food stored at proper temperatures and cooking food to the proper internal temperature. Avoid cross-contamination of food and cooking tools like knives and cutting boards, and sanitize work surfaces after use. BCHD provides more advice about how to avoid foodborne illness and practice food safety in their first issue of the Public Health Data Brief Series.

“We initiated the Public Health Data Brief series because communicating relevant information about health issues facing our community is a top priority for the department,” said Charlie Fautin, Deputy Director in the Benton County Health Department. “Through this new publication, we hope to raise awareness of community health topics, and particularly the importance of prevention.”

The Public Health Data Brief is a new quarterly newsletter published by the Benton County Health Department to help inform and improve the health of everyone who lives, works, learns and plays in Benton County. The series will cover a variety of public health topics affecting Benton County and the next issue will be distributed in February 2017.

Electronic versions of the data brief are available in English and in Spanish on the Benton County Health Department Website, www.co.benton.or.us/health/page/public-health.

Printed versions are posted at the following locations:

- Benton County Board of Commissioner's Office (205 NW 5th St., Corvallis),
- Benton County Courthouse (120 NW 4th St., Corvallis),
- Benton County Sunset Building (4077 SW Research Way, Corvallis),
- Alsea Rural Health Clinic (435 E Alder St., Alsea),
- Monroe School-based Health Clinic (610 Dragon Drive, Monroe),
- Lincoln Elementary School-based Health Clinic (121 SE Viewmont Ave, Corvallis),
- Benton County Avery Building (360 SW Avery Ave., Corvallis), and
- Benton County Health Services building (530 NW 27th St., Corvallis).

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