

Guide for Reporting Foodborne Disease Events through HESN+ Platform

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1. Introduction

Foodborne diseases are among the major public health challenges, as they may cause outbreaks affecting large numbers of people within a short period and may result in significant health, economic, and social consequences. Early outbreak detection and timely reporting are key components of an effective public health response, as they contribute to limiting disease spread, identifying the source of contamination, and implementing the preventive measures necessary to protect the community.

As part of the digital transformation of the public health system, an electronic pathway for reporting foodborne disease events has been developed through the HESN+ platform. This pathway supports the standardisation of reporting procedures, improvement of data quality, strengthening of epidemiological surveillance, and timely public health response and decision-making.

This Guide serves as an operational reference for organising the reporting of foodborne disease events through HESN+. It has been developed in line with currently approved procedures and will be reviewed and updated periodically whenever necessary or when operational procedures or HESN+ functions are modified. This ensures that the Guide remains aligned with operational requirements and best practices in the surveillance of and response to foodborne disease events.

2. Purpose

This Guide aims to describe the procedures for reporting foodborne disease events through the HESN+ platform and to define the responsibilities of the relevant entities. This supports the standardisation of procedures, improvement of data quality, and strengthening of surveillance and response capacities.

3. Scope

This Guide applies to all public and private health facilities, including hospitals, primary health care centres, urgent care centres, outpatient clinics, dispensaries, and medical complexes. It also applies to health clusters and the branches, offices, and sections of the Public Health Authority.

It also applies to health care practitioners and personnel assigned to detect, register, report, and follow up foodborne disease events and cases through the HESN+ platform.

4. Definitions

	Definition
Foodborne Disease	Any disease resulting from the consumption of food contaminated with biological agents, such as bacteria, viruses, or parasites; toxins; chemicals; or physical contaminants, resulting in acute or chronic illness.
Foodborne Disease Outbreak	The occurrence of two or more cases of a similar foodborne illness resulting from the consumption of a common food, with an epidemiological link between the cases and epidemiological analysis implicating that food as the source of illness.
Foodborne Disease Event	Any health occurrence involving one or more suspected or confirmed cases of foodborne disease, whether a single case of high public health significance or a foodborne disease outbreak.
Event Source	Any point in the food chain that is epidemiologically likely to be associated with food contamination and the occurrence of the event.
Suspected Food	Food suspected of causing the event based on epidemiological information or investigation findings.
Incubation Period	The period between the consumption of food contaminated with a causative agent and the onset of symptoms.
Event Detection Time	The date and time at which a foodborne disease event is first recognised or suspected by a health care practitioner or health authority. Reporting timeframes are calculated from this point.
Foodborne Disease Case of High Public Health Significance	A foodborne disease case suspected of being associated with an agent known to cause severe clinical signs or symptoms, serious complications, rapid or widespread dissemination that may threaten public health, or requiring an urgent public health response for control and containment.
HESN+ Platform	An electronic platform that enables public health programmes and health sectors to access preventive health information through a unified central network for collecting and storing public health data. It supports improved notification and

	surveillance systems, preparedness and rapid intervention in response to communicable diseases and epidemics, and information sharing and integration among health sectors.
Initial Notification	A preliminary notification created when a foodborne disease event is suspected. It includes the available initial information necessary to initiate response procedures.
Notification Update	The addition or modification of information relating to the initial notification whenever new information becomes available during investigation or follow-up.
Epidemiological Verification	The process of reviewing and assessing the initial information relating to an event to determine whether it meets the applicable reporting and classification criteria and to identify the appropriate action, as specified in the approved procedures.
Epidemiological Link	A relationship between two or more cases resulting from the consumption of a common food or exposure to a common source within a similar period, suggesting that the cases are associated with the same event.
“Create Outbreak”*	An operational function used in the HESN+ Outbreaks Module to create a notification of a foodborne disease event and initiate event verification and management procedures.
“Suspected Outbreak”*	<p>An operational status used in HESN+ for an event notification after it has been created by the detecting entity and before epidemiological verification has been completed.</p> <p>The notification may represent a suspected foodborne disease outbreak or a single foodborne disease case of high public health significance. This status does not indicate that the event meets the epidemiological definition of an outbreak. The event remains subject to verification and subsequent confirmation or exclusion based on the findings and approved criteria.</p>

* Note: Some terms used in this Guide are based on operational labels used within the HESN+ platform and may not necessarily correspond to commonly used epidemiological or scientific terminology. These terms are retained to ensure consistency between the Guide and the platform's operational workflow.

5. Reportable Foodborne Disease Events

Health facilities shall report suspected foodborne disease events immediately without awaiting laboratory confirmation. Reporting shall be based on the clinical, epidemiological, or laboratory information available at the time the event is detected.

A notification shall be submitted through HESN+ when any of the following is suspected:

- A foodborne disease outbreak.
- A fatal or critical case suspected of being associated with a foodborne disease.
- Any suspected case of foodborne botulism.
- A foodborne disease case of high public health significance, such as suspected food-associated listeriosis.
- Any other event that meets the reporting criteria approved by the Public Health Authority.

The notification shall be completed and updated whenever new information becomes available, as specified in the timeframes set out in this Guide.

6. Reporting and Update Timeframes

Compliance with the reporting and update timeframes is essential to ensure a timely response to and containment of foodborne disease events. All entities covered by this Guide shall comply with the following timeframes:

6.1. Initial Notification

The initial notification shall be submitted through HESN+ **immediately** upon suspicion of a foodborne disease event and **no later than two hours** from the event detection time, without awaiting laboratory results or the completion of all investigation data.

6.2. Notification Updates

Case investigation data and the event notification shall be updated in HESN+ **immediately and no later than two hours** from the time the information becomes available.

7. Electronic Reporting through HESN+ Platform

7.1. HESN+ Platform Modules

HESN+ comprises two interconnected modules that support the surveillance and reporting of foodborne diseases:

First: Investigation Module

The Investigation Module is used to register individual cases and document clinical and epidemiological information and laboratory test results in support of epidemiological surveillance activities.

Second: Outbreaks Module

The Outbreaks Module is used to create and manage event notifications, link related cases, and document epidemiological investigation findings and response measures until the event notification is closed.

7.2. Case Registration in the Investigation Module

When a patient suspected of having a foodborne disease presents to a health facility, the facility shall:

- Create a new investigation in HESN+.
- Enter the patient's information.
- Select the appropriate diagnosis.
- Complete the clinical and epidemiological information.
- Request the necessary laboratory tests and document any inability to collect a specimen or any refusal by the patient.
- Save and submit the investigation data.
- Update the case information and results whenever new information becomes available, as specified in the timeframes set out in this Guide.

Note: Cases registered in the Investigation Module constitute the primary data source for monitoring health events and detecting potential outbreaks.

7.3. Creation of an Event Notification by the Health Facility in the Outbreaks Module

Each health facility that detects one or more cases suspected of being associated with a foodborne disease event shall register the cases in the Investigation Module and create

an event notification in the Outbreaks Module through an authorised user, as specified in the timeframes set out in this Guide.

Prior verification of whether another health facility has already submitted a notification for the same event is not required, thereby avoiding any delay in reporting.

Each health facility shall submit one notification for the same event. Any additional related cases subsequently detected by that facility shall be added to the same notification. A separate event notification shall not be created for each individual case.

The “Create Outbreak” function is used as an operational label in HESN+ to register the notification and initiate event verification and management procedures.

The submission of multiple notifications by different health facilities does not necessarily indicate the occurrence of multiple events or outbreaks, as these notifications may be associated with the same event.

7.4. Event Management Levels

Event Level	Responsible Entity	Responsibilities
Health facility	Health facility	Create the event notification at the facility level, update its information, and follow up cases within the facility.
Health cluster	Health cluster	Support the linking of related cases to event notifications submitted by affiliated facilities, follow up their investigation, and coordinate among affiliated facilities and with the relevant Public Health Authority branch, office, or section.
Region/Governorate	Public Health Authority branch, office, or section	Review incoming notifications, confirm them, and manage events occurring within its jurisdiction.
National level	Public Health Authority Headquarter	Provide oversight and follow-up and coordinate the response when an event involves more than one region.

8. Data Quality Assurance

Data quality is a fundamental component of an effective electronic surveillance system. The following requirements shall therefore be observed:

- Enter data accurately and completely.
- Verify that all mandatory fields are complete before submitting or updating a notification.
- Continuously update notifications whenever new information becomes available.
- Avoid creating more than one notification by the same health facility for the same event.
- Verify the accuracy of data before submission.
- Use approved terminology and classifications.
- Update data within the specified timeframes.

Compliance with these requirements improves surveillance accuracy, strengthens outbreak detection, and enhances the quality of national reports and indicators.

9. Reporting Procedures during HESN+ Downtime

If the HESN+ platform is unavailable because of a technical failure or service interruption, all entities covered by this Guide shall continue reporting suspected foodborne disease events without delay.

Reporting shall be conducted through the alternative reporting channels listed in **Appendix A** by completing the Initial Notification Form for a Suspected Foodborne Disease Event provided in **Appendix B** and sending it to the approved institutional email address of the relevant Public Health Authority branch, office, or section in the region or governorate.

The initial notification form shall be submitted through the alternative channel **immediately** upon event detection and **no later than two hours** from the event detection

time. HESN+ downtime shall not suspend the reporting timeframe or result in its recalculation.

Any new information or results affecting event assessment or response measures shall also be submitted through the alternative reporting channel **immediately and no later than two hours** from the time the information or result becomes available.

The actual date and time of reporting through the alternative channel, the period of HESN+ downtime, and the reason for delayed electronic entry shall be documented to ensure the completeness of the electronic notification and continuity of response documentation, as specified in the approved procedures.

In case HESN+ is out of service or a technical issue, please contact the corresponding HESN+ coordinators through the communication channels in **Appendix C**.

Once HESN+ service is restored, all events reported through alternative channels during the downtime period and all related updates shall be entered into HESN+ immediately and no later than 24 hours from the time service is restored. Priority shall be given to active events and cases of high public health significance.

10. Appendices

- **Appendix A:** Public health authority alternative notification channels.
- **Appendix B:** Initial Notification Form for a Suspected Foodborne Disease Event at a Health Facility.
- **Appendix C:** HESN+ Coordinator Communication Channels

Appendix A

قنوات الإبلاغ البديلة لهيئة الصحة العامة

Public Health Authority Alternative Notification Channels

القطاع Sector	فرع / مكتب / قسم Branch/ Office/ Unit	البريد الإلكتروني Email
الأوسط Central	الفرع الأوسط	central-branch@pha.gov.sa
	الرياض	riyadh@pha.gov.sa
	القصيم	qassim@pha.gov.sa
الشرقي Eastern	الفرع الشرقي	eastern-branch@pha.gov.sa
	الدمام	dammam@pha.gov.sa
	الاحساء	ahsa@pha.gov.sa
	حفر الباطن	hafaralbatin@pha.gov.sa
الشمالي Northern	الفرع الشمالي	northern-branch@pha.gov.sa
	تبوك	tabouk@pha.gov.sa
	حائل	hail@pha.gov.sa
	الحدود الشمالية	northernborders@pha.gov.sa
	الجوف	aljouf@pha.gov.sa
	القرىات	alqurayyat@pha.gov.sa
الغربي Western	الفرع الغربي	western-branch@pha.gov.sa
	مكة المكرمة	makkah@pha.gov.sa
	جدة	jeddah@pha.gov.sa
	المدينة المنورة	madinah@pha.gov.sa
	الطائف	taif@pha.gov.sa
	القنفذة	alqunfudhah@pha.gov.sa
الجنوبي Southern	الفرع الجنوبي	southern-branch@pha.gov.sa
	الباحة	albahah@pha.gov.sa
	نجران	najran@pha.gov.sa
	جازان	jazan@pha.gov.sa
	عسير	aseer@pha.gov.sa
	بيشة	bisha@pha.gov.sa

Appendix B

نموذج بلاغ أولي لاشتباه حدث مرض منقول بالغذاء بالمنشأة الصحية

Initial Notification Form for a Suspected Foodborne Disease Event at a Health Facility

يرسل فوراً عند اكتشاف الحدث، ويجب أن يصل (خلال ساعتين) إلى فرع/مكتب/قسم هيئة الصحة العامة
Must be submitted immediately upon event detection and must reach the PHA branch/office/department within 2 hours

Must be submitted immediately upon event detection and must reach the PHA branch/office/department within 2 hours

بيانات البلاغ										Notification data																								
رقم البلاغ Notification No.					نوع البلاغ Notification type					بلاغ جديد ☐ New					تحديث ☐ update رقم التحديث update no																			
بيانات المنشأة										Health facility data																								
اسم المنشأة الصحية Health facility					المنطقة Region					المدينة/المحافظة City																								
نوع المنشأة Facility type					مركز صحي ☐ PHC					مجمع طبي ☐ Polyclinics					مستشفى ☐ Hospital					أخرى ☐ Other														
قطاع المنشأة Health Sector					حكومي (التجمع) ☐ Gov. Health Clusters					حكومي (عسكري) ☐ Gov. Military					حكومي (تعليمي/جامعي) ☐ Gov. Education					قطاع خاص ☐ Private														
بيانات الحدث										Event Data																								
نوع الحدث Event type					☐ حالة اشتباه بالتسمم الوشيقي المنقول بالغذاء Suspected Foodborne Botulism case					☐ حالة وفاة/درجة مرتبطة بمرض منقول بالغذاء A critical/death case associated with FBD					☐ حالة ذات خطورة وبائية عالية FBD case of high public health significance																			
FBD0 ☐ فاشية					التاريخ Date					الوقت Time					ص AM ☐ م PM ☐																			
زمن اكتشاف الحدث Date and time of detection																																		
بيانات توزيع المصابين										Cases distribution data																								
عدد الحالات المبدئي عند الاكتشاف Initial number of cases at detection					العدد الكلي للمصابين حالياً Current Total number of cases																													
توزيع الحالات الحالي Current status					خروج Discharged					بالعيادات In clinics					بالطوارئ In ER					بالتنويم Inpatient					بالعناية المركزة In ICU									
العدد No. of cases																																		
البيانات السريرية للمصابين										Clinical status of cases																								
الوضع السريري الحالي Current Clinical Status					تعافى Recovered					بسيطة Mild					متوسطة Moderate					شديدة Severe					درجة Critical					وفاة Death				
العدد No. of cases																																		
المصابون في الحدث (حسب الجنس والجنسية والفئة العمرية)										Case characteristics (Nationality, Sex, Age group)																								
عدد المصابين السعوديين					Total number of Saudi cases					عدد المصابين غير السعوديين					Total number of non-Saudi cases																			
أقل من سنة					4-1 سنوات					14-5 سنة					49-15 سنة					50 سنة فأكثر														
ذكر M					أنثى F					ذكر M					أنثى F					ذكر M					أنثى F					ذكر M				
جنسيات غير السعوديين Nationalities of non-Saudis																																		

Suspected food				الأطعمة المشتبه			
		مكان تناول الطعام المشتبه Setting of eating				مكان إعداد الطعام المشتبه Setting of preparation	
						الطعام المشتبه Suspected Food	
						عدد المصابين الذين تناولوه Number of cases	
PM م ☐	AM ص ☐		الوقت Time		التاريخ Date	زمن تناول الطعام المشتبه Date and time of eating	
Suspected food source				مصدر الطعام المشتبه			
Home منزلي ☐				Public عام ☐		نوع المصدر Source type	
		موقع المصدر Source location				اسم المصدر Source name	
Yes نعم ☐ No لا ☐ Unknown غير معروف ☐				هل المصابون في الحدث يشتركون في مصادر التعرض (الإقامة أو تناول الطعام) ؟ Do the cases share a common exposure (living together or sharing meals)?			
Signs and symptoms				الأعراض والعلامات السريرية			
صداع Headache	حمى Fever	براز بدم Bloody stool	إسهال Diarrhea	ألم بالبطن Abdominal pain	قيء Vomiting	غثيان Nausea	الأعراض Symptoms
							العدد No. of cases
							أعراض أخرى Other symptoms
							العدد No. of cases
PM م ☐	AM ص ☐		الوقت Time		التاريخ Date	بداية ظهور الأعراض المرضية Date and time of symptoms onset	
Patient Samples				عينات المصابين			
رفض جميع المصابين أخذ عينات منهم All cases refused to provide samples		No لا ☐		Yes نعم ☐		هل تم أخذ عينات من المصابين Have patient samples been collected?	
		إجمالي عدد عينات المصابين Total Samples Collected from Cases				إجمالي عدد المصابين الذين أخذت العينات منهم Total Number of Cases Provided Samples	
No لا ☐		Yes نعم ☐ النتيجة result				هل ظهرت نتائج إيجابية لعينات المصابين Were any patient sample results positive?	
Additional information				ملاحظات ومعلومات إضافية			
PM م ☐	AM ص ☐		الوقت Time		تاريخ الإبلاغ Date	اسم المسؤول عن الإبلاغ Filled by (name)	
		رقم الجوال Mobile no.			الادارة أو القسم Department	المنشأة التي يعمل بها Health facility	

Notification Update Form Page

صفحة تحديث البلاغ

If the notification is updated, complete the following:			في حال تم تحديث البلاغ يتم تعبئة التالي:		
Increase the No. of cases	☐	زيادة عدد الحالات	سبب التحديث Update reason		رقم تحديث البلاغ Form update No.
Deterioration of health status	☐	تدهور الحالة الصحية			
Emergence of new results	☐	ظهور نتائج جديدة			
Change in FBD source	☐	تغيير في المصدر المحتمل			
Correction of previous data	☐	تصحيح بيانات سابقة			
					اذكر التفاصيل Provide update details
PM م ☐	AM ص ☐		وقت اكتشاف سبب التحديث Time the reason was identified		تاريخ اكتشاف سبب التحديث Date the reason was identified
<p>ملاحظة: يجب وصول النموذج بعد التحديث إلى فرع / مكتب / قسم وقاية خلال ساعتين من زمن اكتشاف سبب التحديث</p> <p>Note: The form, after being updated, must reach the PHA Branch/Office/ Department within two hours of identifying the reason for the update.</p>					

		الجهة التي يعمل بها Facility Name and Department	رقم الجوال Mobile no.	اسم محدث البلاغ Filled by (name)
PM م ☐	AM ص ☐	وقت ارسال التحديث Submitting update time		تاريخ ارسال التحديث Submitting update date

Appendix C

	قنوات التواصل بمنسقي منصة حصن+
	HESN+ Coordinator Communication Channels

البريد الإلكتروني E-Mail	فرع / مكتب / قسم Branch/ Office/ Unit	
abmakkam@moh.gov.sa	Riyadh	الرياض
nalmeaully@moh.gov.sa	Qassim	القصيم
aalKumiry@moh.gov.sa	Eastern	الشرقية
dabuzaid@moh.gov.sa	Ahsa	الاحساء
fkalanazi@moh.gov.sa	Hafr albatin	حفر الباطن
abalalbalawi@moh.gov.sa	Tabouk	تبوك
salmuhawwis@moh.gov.sa	Hail	حائل
sahammad@moh.gov.sa	Northern borders	الحدود الشمالية
tiahmed@moh.gov.sa	Aljouf	الجوف
mmohammed39@moh.gov.sa	Alqurayyat	القريات
abaqunduwan@moh.gov.sa	Makkah	مكة المكرمة
eabakhsh@moh.gov.sa	Jeddah	جدة
hel-shaikh@moh.gov.sa	Madinah	المدينة المنورة
tmaIjuaid@moh.gov.sa	Taif	الطائف
telhassan@moh.gov.sa	Alqunfudhah	القنفذة
aalghamdi30@moh.gov.sa	Albahah	الباحة
yalshaiban@moh.gov.sa	Najran	نجران
ahobani@moh.gov.sa	Jazan	جازان
ajalshahrani@moh.gov.sa	Aseer	عسير
nhalbishi@moh.gov.sa	Bisha	بيشة

وقاية

هيئة الصحة العامة
PUBLIC HEALTH AUTHORITY