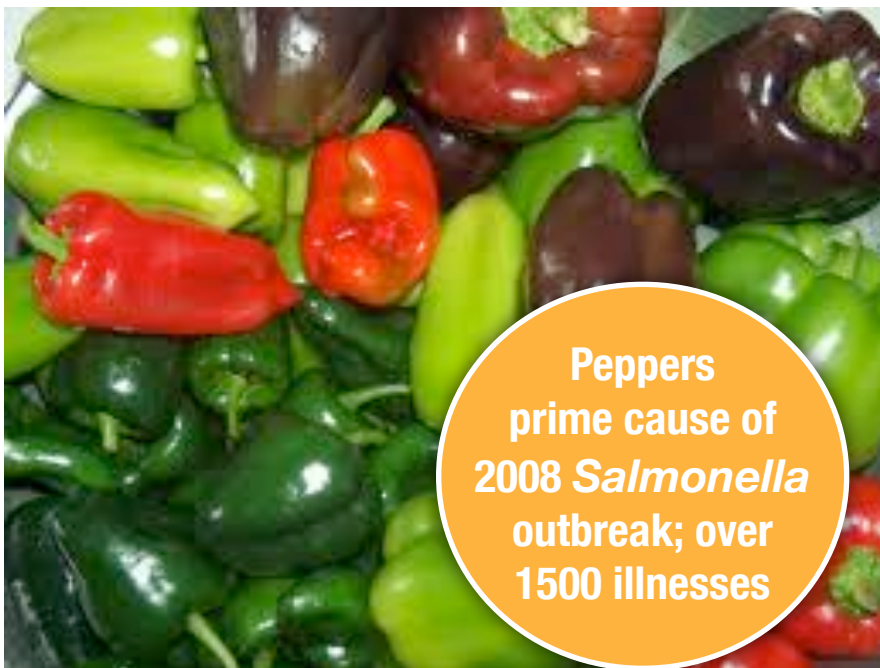


# Temperature abuse a factor in 2008 *Salmonella* outbreak



Peppers  
prime cause of  
2008 *Salmonella*  
outbreak; over  
1500 illnesses

Pepper and tomato-containing dishes sitting out at room temperature may have made the outbreak larger.

After investigation into the 2008 *Salmonella* outbreak that sickened over 1500 people throughout North America, the U.S. CDC determined that Serrano peppers were the primary source of the illnesses. Contamination was linked to the farm where the peppers were produced (water

samples from the sites tested positive for the outbreak strain of *Salmonella*). Investigators believe that that tomato-based dishes such as salsa, which also contained peppers, held above 41 °F for more than 4 hours increased the risk of patrons becoming ill. Diced, sliced or pureed tomatoes can support provides a great environment for bacteria such as *Salmonella* to multiply. It is a common, but risky, practice to hold salsa and guacamole at room temperatures for more than 4 hours.

## What you can do:

- Refrigerate tomato dishes below 41 °F.
- Avoid cross-contamination especially with tomato dishes.
- Ask suppliers to follow good agricultural practices.

## PROPER STORAGE OF TOMATO-BASED PRODUCTS CAN REDUCE RISKS

