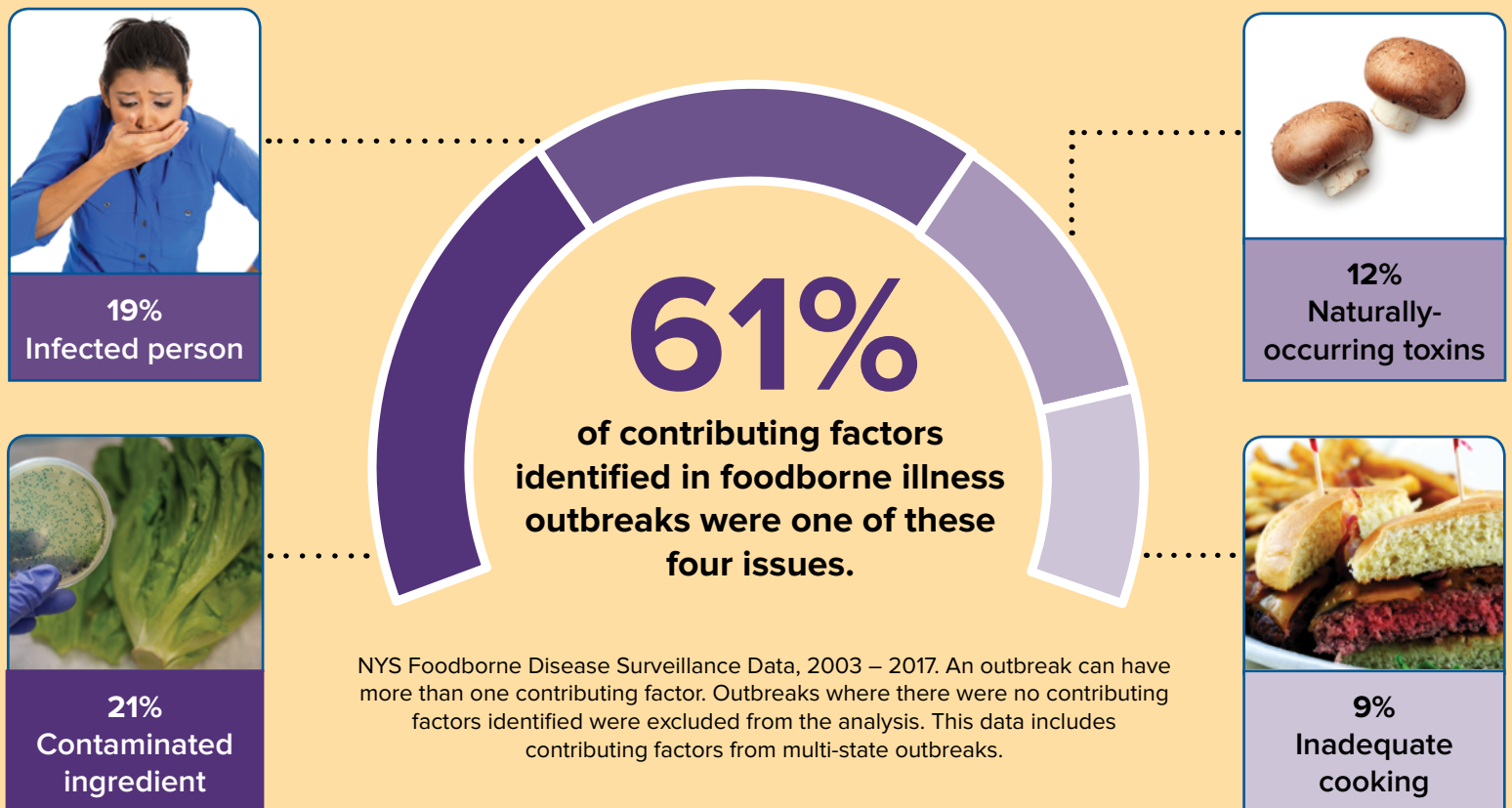


# Understanding Contributing Factors

Contributing factors are practices and environmental conditions that lead to outbreaks. Knowing the contributing factors and how to prevent them can stop an outbreak and prevent future outbreaks and illnesses.



**Infected person:** A food handler, who was infected with a pathogen, transmitted the pathogen during food preparation.

**Contaminated ingredient:** The food contained the pathogen when it arrived at the point of preparation.

**Naturally-occurring food toxins:** The food naturally contained a chemical agent, or it bioaccumulated in the food prior to/after harvest, like those in finfish and wild mushrooms.

**Inadequate cooking:** The food was not heated long enough at an adequate temperature to kill the pathogens.