Gastrointestinal Illness Strikes
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Worksheet 2

You learn that the picnic was held at the park next to the school, and lasted from 12 noon to 5 pm. The food, which was contributed by member of the community, was spread out on a table and consumed throughout the afternoon.

You are able to interview 75 of the 80 people who attended the supper. Your finding on food and beverage consumption are detailed in the attached line listing, along with the time of onset of symptoms for people who became ill. Unfortunately, only about half of those who became ill reported the time when they had eaten.

A doctor treated approximately 20% of the sick people. 5 fecal specimens were obtained for bacteriologic testing.

5. What number will you use for the population at risk in this study? Why?

6. As soon as epidemiologists have the necessary data, they develop an epidemic curve. How does an epidemic curve help in an investigation?
7a. Group Activity: Using data from the attached line listing, graph the cases by time of onset of illness, to create an epidemic curve. Label the axes and add an appropriate title.

7b. What does this epidemic curve tell you? What might you learn from the outliers?