



Food Poisoning

Food Poisoning Chart

Cause	Signs & Symptoms	Prevention
Botulism. Toxin from bacteria usually from eating improperly canned foods. Also found in honey and oils infused with garlic. Grows only in little or no oxygen.	Blurred vision. Double vision. A hard time speaking and swallowing. Breathing problems. Muscle weakness. Paralysis. Signs occur within 4 to 36 hours.	Follow proper canning methods. Boil home-canned food for 10 or more minutes. Don't eat foods from cans with leaks or bulges. Refrigerate oils infused with garlic or herbs. Don't give honey to children less than 1 year old.
<i>E. coli.</i> Bacteria from contaminated water, raw milk, raw or rare ground beef, unpasteurized apple juice or cider, or contact with contaminated animal feces.	Diarrhea or bloody discharge. Abdominal cramps. Nausea. Signs occur within 2 to 5 days and last about 8 days.	Don't drink unpasteurized milk and apple cider. Wash your hands after using the bathroom and cleaning up animal feces.
Listeria. Bacteria from unpasteurized milk, uncooked meats, foods contaminated during processing (cold cuts, hot dogs, soft cheeses).	Fever. Chills. Headache. Backache. Abdominal pain. Diarrhea. Often, signs occur within 48 to 72 hours, but can take up to 3 weeks to occur.	Don't drink unpasteurized milk. Cook beef to an internal temperature of 160°F.
Salmonella. Bacteria from raw or undercooked eggs, poultry, and meat and from food that comes in contact with contaminated surfaces.	Stomach pain. Diarrhea. Nausea. Chills. Fever. Headache. Signs occur within 8 to 12 hours and last up to 1 or 2 days.	Don't have unpasteurized milk, raw and undercooked eggs. Cook eggs to 160°F (the white and yolk are firm). Use clean utensils and surfaces.
<i>Staphylococcal enterotoxin.</i> Toxin from bacteria usually from meats, dairy foods, eggs, etc. that are not kept cold (e.g., unrefrigerated, at picnics, etc.) Also spread by human contact.	Severe nausea. Abdominal cramps. Diarrhea. Vomiting. Signs occur within 1 to 6 hours and last up to 3 days. Signs last longer if severe dehydration occurs.	Keep foods that can spoil cold (40°F or below) or hot (140°F or higher). Don't eat foods kept for more than 2 hours between 40°F and 140°F. Don't eat foods that look or smell spoiled. Wash your hands often. Use clean utensils and surfaces.
Chemicals. From foods with pesticides and eating poisonous mushrooms or poisonous plant leaves or berries.	Sweating. Dizziness. Mental confusion. Very teary eyes. Watery mouth. Stomach pain. Vomiting. Diarrhea. Signs start to occur within 30 minutes.	Wash raw fruits and vegetables before eating them. Don't store food or liquids in containers with lead-based paints. Don't store alcohol in lead crystal containers.

Food Poisoning Chart, continued on next page



Food Poisoning, Continued

Food Poisoning Chart		
Cause	Signs & Symptoms	Prevention
Hepatitis A virus. From contaminated water, raw and undercooked shellfish, oysters, clams, mussels, scallops, etc.	Appetite loss. Nausea. Vomiting. Fever. Jaundice and dark urine after 3 to 10 days. Liver damage and death from severe infection.	Hepatitis A vaccine. Don't eat raw or undercooked shellfish, oysters, etc.
Norwalk-like viruses. From food and touching objects contaminated with the virus. Direct contact with an infected person.	Nausea. Vomiting. Diarrhea. Stomach cramps. Signs occur within 12 to 48 hours and last up to 2 days.	Wash your hands often, especially after using the bathroom, changing diapers, and before handling food. Disinfect contaminated surfaces.
Mercury. From eating contaminated fish (e.g., shark, swordfish, tuna, king mackerel, tilefish).	Numbness and tingling in the lips, fingers, and toes. A hard time walking and speaking. Muscle weakness. Memory loss. Mental changes. Tremors.	Check local health department for safety of fish. Limit fish high in mercury. Pregnant women need to follow the advice of their doctor.

Treatment

Self-care treats most cases. Botulism, chemical food poisoning, and severe bacterial food poisoning need immediate care.

Questions to Ask

Do you have any of these problems?

- **Botulism symptoms** listed at www.HealthyLearn.com.
- **Signs of dehydration** listed at www.HealthyLearn.com.
- You vomit bright red blood or matter that looks like coffee grounds.
- You have bright red blood in diarrhea.
- You have a severe headache that persists, a stiff neck, or a convulsion.
- You are confused.



NO

Do you have any of these problems?

- Severe vomiting. Blood-streaked stools.
- Fever over 101°F.
- Pain has lasted for several hours or the pain gets worse.



NO

Do you vomit after having only ice chips for 12 hours? Or, do you still have diarrhea after using self-care for 2 days?



NO



Self-Care / Prevention

- For chemical food poisoning, call the Poison Control Center (800.222.1222).
- See **Self-Care / Prevention for Vomiting and Nausea; Diarrhea** at www.HealthyLearn.com.
- Heed warnings for food products that could be harmful. News reports list these items. So does the FDA at www.fda.gov.

Flowchart continued in next column