

FOOD POISONING TREATMENT AND PREVENTION (Food-borne Illnesses)

Eating food that is tainted with germs such as bacteria, viruses, or other organisms can cause food-borne illness. This is also known as “food poisoning.” The harmful foods may not taste or smell any different than healthy foods. For information on the types of illnesses, see page 2.

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

Many people think they have the “stomach flu” when it may really be food-borne illness. Usual symptoms include diarrhea, vomiting, nausea, fever, and cramps. These symptoms usually come on suddenly. The child may also have a bad headache.

TREATMENT

Milder cases may go away on their own without any medicine. Do not use over-the-counter anti-diarrhea medicine for your child unless your doctor or nurse tells you to. If used, be sure to follow their directions **exactly**.

- Continue to give your child small frequent amounts of liquids:
 - **For infants:** Give Pedialyte, breast milk or infant formula.
 - **For infants over 6 months, toddlers, and children:** Give flavored drinks, diluted 3-to-1 with water, Popsicles or Pedialyte Popsicles, or water. (Refer to the Helping Hand, *Diarrhea*, HH-I-29). Watch for signs and symptoms of dehydration.
- Add solid foods such as crackers, dry cereal and low fat, low-spice foods a little at a time until your child can eat his regular foods.

WHEN TO CALL THE DOCTOR

Call your doctor or nurse if any of the following occurs:

- If your child suddenly develops a high fever over 101°F axillary (under the arm)
- If the stomach pain becomes severe (worse than a few cramps)
- If the diarrhea gets worse or becomes bloody (more than a streak of blood)
- If you notice any signs of dehydration: dry mouth; decreased urine output; mouth is dry or sticky; child is listless (no energy); eyes are sunken; infant's “soft spot” on top of the head “pulls in.”
- Child does not improve in 24 hours.



Picture 1 Call the doctor if your child does not improve in 24 hours.

PREVENTION

Preventing illness starts when you buy food at the grocery store. Besides good handwashing, be sure to follow these three main rules:

- Keep food clean.
- Cook food completely.
- Keep hot foods hot and cold foods cold.

OTHER FOOD HANDLING TIPS

- **Eggs** - Cook eggs until yolks and whites are firm. Avoid recipes that contain raw eggs, and don't sampling cookie dough containing raw eggs.
- **Fruits and vegetables** - Scrub all fruits and vegetables well that are to be eaten uncooked.
- **Meats** - Cook meat thoroughly. Do not partly grill or cook meat to use later. If you must cook ahead, chill food quickly in the refrigerator for later reheating. Then reheat pre-cooked meats until steaming hot. Marinate raw meat, fish, or poultry in the refrigerator - not on the counter. Don't reuse marinade from raw meat unless you boil it for several minutes to destroy bacteria. When grilling out, cut into the meat, poultry, or fish to make sure it is done. Never put cooked meat back on the same plate that held the raw meat. Use a meat thermometer when cooking inside and out to check the inner temperature of the food.
- **Coolers** -If you use a cooler for foods when you're away from home in warm weather, put the cooler inside an air-conditioned car - not in the trunk. Replace ice if it melts. Keep drinks in their own cooler, away from other foods that may carry bacteria. When preparing foods, wash surfaces and utensils with soap and hot water between uses.
- Keep paper towels and disposable Towelettes for washing hands before and after handling food and after using the bathroom.
- If you use dishcloths or towels in the kitchen, launder them often with bleach and detergent. "Sour-smelling" sponges should be thrown away.



KEEP COLD FOODS COLD



Picture 2 Meat should be fully cooked and kept hot.

TYPES OF FOOD-BORNE ILLNESS

- **Salmonella.** *Salmonella* and *Campylobacter* are bacteria found in raw meat, poultry, eggs, or unpasteurized dairy products. The bacteria *Clostridium perfringens* may be present in these same foods as well as raw vegetables or herbs.
- **"Staph" illness.** *Staphylococcus aureus* are bacteria that normally live on the skin and the mucous membranes of the nose and throat. During food handling these germs may be passed to food. Foods that are not stored at proper temperatures may cause the bacteria to grow and cause food poisoning.
- **Hepatitis A** is caused by a virus and may be passed through foods. Hepatitis A can lead to liver damage. The virus may be spread by contact with fecal matter (bowel movements) as a result of poor handwashing after using the bathroom. Because the virus may live in sewage, uncooked shellfish and other raw seafood may transmit Hepatitis A.
- **E coli.** *Escherichia coli* 0157 is a bacterial infection. It leads to bloody diarrhea and sometimes to kidney failure. Most E. coli 0157 infections have been linked to eating undercooked, tainted ground beef. Person-to-person contact in families and childcare centers is one way the illness is spread. A person can also become infected after drinking raw milk, or by swimming in or drinking water polluted by sewage.

- **Botulism** is rare, but it is the most serious form of food poisoning. It is caused by *Clostridium botulinum* bacteria often found in soil and water. In low-acid foods such as meat, fish, poultry or vegetables (especially in improperly canned foods), the bacteria can multiply rapidly. Baked potatoes and pot pies left at room temperature for too long may also allow the bacteria to multiply and produce the toxins (poisons) that cause botulism.

| How Hot Is Hot Enough? | |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| Food | Minimum Internal Temperature |
| <u>Ground Products</u> | |
| Hamburger | 160°F |
| Beef, veal, lamb, pork | 160°F |
| Chicken, turkey | 165°F |
| <u>Beef, Veal, Lamb</u> | |
| <i>Roasts & Steaks</i> | |
| Medium-rare | 145°F |
| Medium | 160°F |
| Well-done | 170°F |
| <u>Pork</u> | |
| <i>Chops, roasts, ribs</i> | |
| Medium | 160°F |
| Well-done | 170°F |
| Ham, fresh | 160°F |
| Sausage, fresh | 160°F |
| <u>Poultry</u> | |
| Chicken, whole & pieces | 165°F |
| Duck | 165°F |
| Turkey (unstuffed) | 165°F |
| Whole | 165°F |
| Breast | 165°F |
| Dark meat | 165°F |
| Stuffing (cooked separately) | 165°F |
| <u>Fish</u> | |
| | 165°F |
| <u>Eggs</u> | |
| <i>Fried, poached until yolk and white are firm</i> | 160°F |
| Casseroles, sauces, custards | 160°F |
| <u>Fruits & Vegetables (when cooked)</u> | |
| | 140°F |
| <u>Leftovers</u> | |
| | 165°F |

HOW TO USE THE THERMOMETER

Roasts: Insert thermometer midway without touching the bone.

Hamburgers, Steaks, Chops: Insert thermometer into thickest part of meat.

Poultry: Place thermometer in thickest part of the thigh.

Thin Foods: Insert thermometer sideways so you can take the temperature in the center of the food.

Casseroles & Combination Dishes: Place thermometer in thickest part of the food or center of the dish.