

## Tips to Prevent Bacterial Food Poisoning

- Practice good hygiene; wash hands thoroughly before, during and after food preparation and service
- Avoid the use of porous and wooden cutting boards; they harbor bacteria
- Wash cutting boards frequently
- Keep cold foods cold, preferably less than 40 degrees Fahrenheit
- Keep hot foods hot, preferably above 165 degrees Fahrenheit
- Cool foods rapidly after preparation
- Refrigerate leftover foods immediately
- Thaw frozen food in the refrigerator
- Cook food thoroughly to kill bacteria



## Other Types of Food Poisoning

### Additives and Preservatives

Food additives and preservatives also may contaminate foods and produce toxic and allergic reactions. Monosodium glutamate (MSG), which may be found in Chinese foods, can cause headache, intestinal discomfort and even chest pain that resembles a heart attack.



### Chemicals

People also may be poisoned by eating food contaminated with industrial chemicals. Heavy metal poisoning can occur when food products are stored in improper containers. For example, lead poisoning can occur when acidic substances, such as citrus juices, are stored in pottery containers.

### Natural Toxins

Some mushrooms can cause serious liver poisoning. Never pick and eat wild mushrooms.

Toxins found in fish can cause fatal poisoning episodes. Shellfish also can harbor viruses and bacteria; always keep them cold and cook them thoroughly before eating.



## If You Suspect Food Poisoning:

- Contact your local poison center or physician immediately.
- Drink clear fluids to avoid becoming dehydrated.
- Do not self-administer medication unless instructed to do so.
- If symptoms persist, seek medical attention.
- Do not eat any additional contaminated food. Discard it immediately.

If you suspect a poisoning emergency, call your local poison center immediately at 1-800-222-1222.



Use Mr. Yuk to teach your children about poisons and how to contact your poison center.

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# Facts About Food Poisoning



## Facts About Food Poisoning

**Food poisoning is a serious problem that affects thousands of individuals every year.**

Anyone who eats food that has been contaminated by bacteria or chemicals can get food poisoning. In addition, some plants and wild mushrooms can cause food poisoning. Food poisoning must be recognized early to prevent a minor problem from becoming a serious health problem.

## Bacterial Food Poisoning

**Bacterial food poisoning is the most common form of food poisoning.**

It occurs when we eat food that is contaminated with bacteria. Some types of bacteria produce enough toxin to poison an individual or pet directly while others produce an infection that causes illness.

Most incidents of bacterial food poisoning are caused by improper handwashing, or the failure to wash hands or wear gloves when preparing and serving food. Another reason is the failure to keep food at the proper temperature during preparation, storage and service. Food also can be contaminated if utensils and cutting surfaces are not washed between the preparation of different foods. Some foods also may be contaminated during commercial processing or storage or when food is heated or cooled inadequately.



## Basic Bacteria

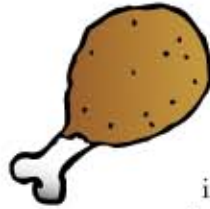
**Staphylococcus, Salmonella, Shigella, E. coli and Clostridium are common forms of bacteria that may enter food and cause food poisoning.**

### Staphylococcus

Staphylococcus (staph) bacteria grow very rapidly, especially in foods with high protein content such as meat, beans and dairy products. When these foods are not kept adequately hot or cold, the bacteria multiply and produce a toxin that cannot be destroyed by additional cooling or cooking. Once the contaminated food is eaten, the poison affects the digestive tract and may cause nausea, cramping, vomiting and diarrhea. The symptoms can last for 24–48 hours.



### Salmonella



Salmonella causes one of the most dangerous forms of food poisoning. Salmonella bacteria are found most commonly in raw or uncooked chicken, turkey, eggs and unpasteurized dairy products. The bacteria invade and reproduce in the digestive tract causing severe diarrhea. Symptoms may last for days and dehydration is a major concern. It is important to seek immediate medical attention if you suspect Salmonella food poisoning.

### Shigella

Shigella usually is transmitted by food handlers. Good hygiene, thorough handwashing and careful washing and preparation of fruits and vegetables can help prevent Shigella from contaminating food.



When Shigella bacteria are present in food they enter the digestive tract and cause severe diarrhea. In some patients, the bacteria may enter the bloodstream and infect the entire body.

### E. coli



An extremely infectious E. coli strain (E. coli O157:H7) has been publicized widely as the cause of serious illness and fatalities. However, most often, individuals who are infected with E. coli bacteria experience severe abdominal cramps and diarrhea. A small percentage of people may suffer permanent kidney damage if the infection goes untreated. Since ground beef is the main source of E. coli bacteria, the best way to prevent E. coli food poisoning is to cook the meat thoroughly. Never eat raw or undercooked ground beef.

### Botulism

Bacteria called Clostridium botulinum are responsible for the most deadly form of bacterial food poisoning. When food is processed improperly, these bacteria multiply and produce a poison that affects the nervous system and causes botulism. The symptoms of botulism may begin as soon as 12–36 hours after eating the contaminated food. Symptoms include double vision, inability to swallow, difficulty speaking and the inability to breathe. A common warning sign of possible botulism contamination is a bulging container or lid. This bulging occurs from gas that is produced by the growing bacteria.



A rare form of botulism called infant botulism may occur when honey is fed to infants. Honey may contain botulism spores that can become bacteria when swallowed. Honey should not be fed to infants.

