

FOOD POISONING

(Food-borne Illness)

All foods naturally contain small amounts of bacteria. When food is poorly handled, improperly cooked or inadequately stored, bacteria can multiply enough to cause illness.

- Bacteria is the most common reason for illness.
- Parasites, viruses and chemicals can also contaminate food; however, this is less common.

Illness and severity of illness is dependent upon:

- The organism (ex: Campylobacter, Clostridium, E. Coli, Salmonella, Staphylococcus, etc.)
- Amount of exposure to the organism
- Exposed person's age
- Exposed person's health

Increased risk / high risk groups

- Young children
- Immune suppressed (cancer treatment)
- Diabetics
- AIDS patients

Ailments caused by food poisoning

- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Stomach Pain
- Diarrhea

If you become ill 1-6 hours after eating contaminated food or water, you probably have a common type of food poisoning.

Self Care Treatment

- Rest and drink plenty of clear liquids
- DO NOT use anti-diarrheal medication. This may slow elimination of the bacteria and toxins from your system.
- Mild to moderate illness often resolves on its own within 12 hours.

If symptoms last more than 12 hours or if you have severe symptoms or belong to one of the above mentioned high risk groups, please see your physician.

CAUTION

One potentially fatal food poison is Botulism. It results from eating foods containing a toxin formed by certain spores in the food. The most common source is home-canned food such as tomatoes and green beans. These symptoms usually begin 12-36 hours after eating contaminated food and may include:

- Headache
- Blurred/Double vision
- Muscle weakness
- Some people experience nausea, vomiting, constipation, urinary retention and reduced salivation

These symptoms require immediate attention.

If you feel you may have or had food poisoning it is very important to follow up with the *food provider* or Health Services (563-588-6374).