

IDENTIFYING FOOD POISONING

There Can be as Many as 33 Million Cases of Food Poisoning a Year

1 Out of Every 1000 People Suffer Food Poisoning from Salmonella and 3 out of Every 10,000 Cases are Caused by E.coli

While food poisoning can be concerning, it is important to take proper steps in aiding your body to recovery. Looking for specific symptoms and monitoring your condition are keys to proper diagnosis and treatment.

Please use this guide as a resource for knowledge and understanding of food poisoning causes, symptoms, diagnosis, treatment, and prevention.

01 | Cause

Most frequently, food poisoning may be due to infection caused by bacteria, viruses, parasites, and infrequently, prions. More than 200 infectious causes exist. Sometimes it is not bacterium that causes the problem, but rather the toxin that bacteria produce in the food before it is eaten. This is the case with Staphylococcal food poisoning and with botulism. Other illnesses may involve chemical toxins that are produced in certain foods that are poorly cooked or stored.

02 | Symptoms

Symptoms of food poisoning can be confused with symptoms of many other illnesses so it is important to seek treatment if the condition worsens or is prolonged. Patients often suffer from dehydration, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, fever, weakness, muscle aches, cramping and bloating. There are different incubation periods for food poisoning therefore the onset of symptoms may be experienced long after the food was consumed.

03 | Diagnosis

Self-diagnosis is possible if you believe to know the source of the infection, illness occurred quickly, have mild symptoms, and symptom resolution within a couple of days. For more severe cases with more violent and prolonged symptoms, medical attention and diagnosis may be necessary. A provider may ask about travel history, diet history, symptoms and take vital signs in order to diagnose food poisoning. For severe cases, blood tests, stool samples or immunological test may be necessary to identify and combat the specific cause of the illness.

04 | Treatment

Good hydration is the number one concern in patients with food poisoning, as the body loses so much fluid due to symptoms. More severe symptoms or illnesses can occur if proper hydration is not maintained. Medications combat most symptoms and can be easily managed. In cases involving certain bacteria or viruses extra precautions are taken so there is less spread of the illness and infectious disease specialists monitor the patient.

05 | Prevention

It is important to understand the various conditions that harbor harmful bacteria in food and to avoid harmful practices. Proper preparations, cooking and storing of food is important to avoiding potential food poisoning. Educating yourself in proper food preparation to avoid cross contamination and successful cleaning of foods may help avoid food poisoning. Cooking foods kills most bacteria that could be present. Storing food at proper temperatures and proper cooling and heating instructions is the final preventative measure to ensure harmful substances cannot live or grow on food. If you suspect any food to be improperly maintained in any way, do not consume it. Food will often look, smell or taste as if it has been improperly handled.

Learn more about food poisoning and food preparation, please visit: <https://www.foodsafety.gov>

***Did You Know?
Severe food poisoning can
be life threatening***

References

http://www.medicinenet.com/food_poisoning/article.htm

<http://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/food-poisoning/home/ovc-20337610>

<http://www.webmd.com/food-recipes/food-poisoning/understanding-food-poisoning-symptoms>