



# Food Poisoning

## Prevention is the key

**Foodborne illness, sometimes called food poisoning, is a common problem.**

Food poisoning symptoms vary with the source of contamination. Most types of food poisoning cause one or more of the following signs and symptoms:

- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Watery diarrhea
- Abdominal pain and cramps
- Fever

Signs and symptoms may start within hours of eating the contaminated food, or they may begin days or even weeks later. Sickness caused by food poisoning generally lasts from a few hours to several days.

In a healthy adult, food poisoning usually gets better without seeing a doctor. It's important to maintain your fluid intake in order to prevent dehydration caused by vomiting and diarrhea. Children are more likely to develop dehydration and must be watched closely.

See your doctor or health care provider if you have diarrhea along with a high fever (temperature over 101.5°F, measured orally), blood in the stool, prolonged vomiting that prevents you from keeping liquids down, signs of dehydration (including a decrease in urination, dry mouth and throat, or feeling dizzy when standing up), or if you have had diarrhea for **more than three days**.

**How can foodborne illness be prevented?**

- Always refrigerate meat products. Never leave raw meats at room temperature.
- Always cook meat completely. Never eat raw meat.
- Always thoroughly cook eggs or foods that contain eggs.
- Avoid using unpasteurized milk.
- Carefully wash hands before and after preparing food.
- Make sure children wash their hands carefully, especially after using the toilet or handling pets.
- Always wash hands with soap and warm water after using the toilet or changing diapers.
- When in doubt, throw it out. Spoiled food may not have a bad odor or change in color.

If you suspect you've developed food poisoning from food you ate at a restaurant, it's important to notify the proper authorities. You might help prevent an outbreak causing illness in many people.

Suspected cases of food poisoning can be reported to your local county health department.



If you have questions about **food safety or food poisoning**, please don't wait for symptoms to appear!

Specially trained pharmacists and nurses are available 24/7 to assist you with your emergency and answer your questions.

Copy in this fact sheet has been adapted from [foodsafety.gov](http://foodsafety.gov) and [FDA.gov](http://FDA.gov)

Oklahoma Center for Poison and Drug Information website: [OklahomaPoison.org](http://OklahomaPoison.org)



## Rules of Food Safety

### CLEAN

- Frequently wash your hands and surfaces that food touches. Germs can survive in many places around your kitchen, including your hands, utensils and cutting boards.
- Wash items that have touched raw foods (e.g., knives, cutting boards) before allowing them to come in contact with other food.
- Rinse fresh fruits and vegetables under running water.

### SEPARATE

- Don't cross-contaminate. Even after you've thoroughly cleaned your hands and surfaces thoroughly, raw meat, poultry, seafood and eggs can still spread germs to ready-to-eat foods unless you keep them separate.

### COOK

- Cook foods to the correct temperature. While many people believe they can tell when food is "done" by simply checking its color and texture, there's no way to be sure it's safe without following a few simple but important steps:
  - Use a food thermometer to ensure that foods are cooked to a safe internal temperature: **145°F for whole meats (allowing the meat to rest for three minutes before carving or consuming), 160°F for ground meats, and 165°F for all poultry. Poultry juices should be clear, not pink.**
  - Cook fish until it flakes, and eggs should be firm, not runny.

### CHILL

- Keep a thermometer in your refrigerator and maintain the temperature below 40°F. Germs can grow in many foods within two hours unless you refrigerate them. (During the summer heat, cut that time down to one hour)
- Thaw food in the refrigerator, microwave, or under cold running water. Do NOT leave food on the counter to thaw at room temperature.