FOOD POISONING

Foodborne illness, more commonly referred as a food poisoning, is the result of eating contaminated, spoiled, or toxic food.

**What causes food poisoning**?

* Bacteria

Bacteria is by far the most prevalent cause of food poisoning

Ex. *E. coli, Listeria and salmonella, Shigella sp.,*

*Staphylococcus, Campylobacter and C. botulinum (*botulism*) and Vibrio cholerae*

* Parasites ex. Taenia sp., Entamoeba histolytica, Giardia lamblia and Toxoplasma
* Viruses ex. Norovirus and rotavirus and hepatitis A
* Natural toxic substances such as poisonous mushrooms

These infectious agents can exist in foods at any stage, such as when they are packaged, shipped, stored or cooked.

\*Certain foods are more likely to harbor harmful agents.These include raw eggs, unpasteurized milk and juice.Soft cheeses and raw or undercooked meat or seafood.

**Infectious dose**

Is the amount of the agent that must be consumed to give rise to symptoms of foodborne illness, and varies according to the agent and the consumer’s age and overall health.

**Incubation peroid**

The time needed for symptoms to appear after exposure to the pathogenic agents

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-Staph. Aureus 1-6hrs

-E. coli 12-48hrs

-Shigella, campylobacter 48-72hrs

-More than 7days Giardiasis, Amoebiasis

**Food poisoning symptoms**

Symptoms depend on the source of infection.

Common cases of food poisoning will typically include at least three of the following symptoms:

* Abdominal cramps
* Diarrhea
* Vomiting
* Loss of appetite
* Mild fever

Symptoms of potentially life threatening food poisoning include:

* Diarrhea persisting for more than 3 days
* High grade fever
* Difficulty seeing or speaking
* Symptoms of severe dehydration (dry mouth, passing little or no urine, etc)
* Bloody urine

**Stereotypical histories**

* E. Coli common amongst travelers
* Giardiasis prolonged non bloody diarrhea
* Staphylococcus severe vomiting short incubation period
* Cholera profuse watery diarrhea severe dehydration results in weight loss
* Campylobacter a flue like syndrome is usually followed by crampy abdominal pain, fever and diarrhea which may be bloody
* Amoebiasis bloody diarrhea, abdominal pain and tenderness
* Shigella fever, bloody diarrhea, vomiting and abdominal pain

**How is food poisoning treated?**

* In most cases, there isn’t much your doctor can specifically do for you, and you get better on your own within a few days.
* adults or children who lose a lot of fluids (dehydration) may need to go to the hospital to get an IV fluid
* For severe food poisoning caused by certain bacteria, such as *Listeria*, you may get antibiotics
* You may also get medicine for food poisoning caused by parasites. For viruses, there’s nothing you can take.
* Antiemetic drugs could be considered
* What is the role of antidiarrheal drugs?