

HOW TO TREAT FOOD POISONING

1 Stay hydrated.

The symptoms of food poisoning vary depending on the type of microorganism or toxin ingested, but can generally cause severe stomach cramping, fever, vomiting, and diarrhea, leading to dehydration. Drink several gallons of water per day.

2 Replenish mineral salts.

Eat bland foods, in moderation, as soon as you are able. Diarrhea depletes the body of salts, and drinking water alone will not replace them; sports rehydration drinks are effective. Nibble on dry salted crackers or plain rice to replenish salts, too.

3 Do not induce vomiting.

Depending on the microorganism or toxin involved, food poisoning may cause vomiting, which does not clear the bacteria from the body, but will cause further dehydration.

4 Do not take anti-peristaltic medication.

Some anti-diarrhea medications work by slowing the movement of waste in the gut, causing the toxins to remain in the body for a longer period of time.

5 Avoid alcohol, spicy foods, and milk products.

These drinks and foods may aggravate the gut and cause additional gas and cramping. Never follow a suspect meal with a drink of alcohol to “kill” the germs; this is not effective.

6 Be prepared for several days of discomfort.

Food poisoning may induce a severe headache and sweating. Keep the body cool: Never try to sweat out the germs. The symptoms of food poisoning are usually short-lived. If the symptoms persist for more than a week, or if you detect bleeding, consult a health care professional.

HOLIDAY FOOD ALERT

Oysters should be fully cooked.

Raw oysters are particularly susceptible to invasions by microorganisms that can cause food poisoning: If the raw oyster tastes “off” in any way, do not swallow it.

Fully cook all meat.

Poultry should be fully cooked, with no traces of pink or red, to an internal temperature of 165° F. Beef and game should be cooked to at least 140° F.

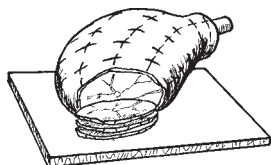
Serve cooked foods immediately.

Cooked foods that are not served immediately must be kept at a holding temperature between 140° and 165° F. Do not leave food unrefrigerated longer than two hours or the chances of bacterial growth increase.

Foods That Pose a Special Risk of Food Poisoning



oysters



ham



turkey



shrimp cocktail



eggnog



damaged canned foods



Egg yolks should not be eaten raw or runny.

This will reduce the risk of salmonella poisoning. Eggnog usually contains raw egg yolks, so make sure the eggnog you drink has been pasteurized. Homemade mayonnaise is made with raw eggs, so avoid it.



Cooked shellfish should be kept on ice.

Fish and seafood, especially shellfish, are often harbor to many different kinds of microorganisms.



Avoid any dented cans.

If the seal on the can has been affected, the contents may be contaminated and you risk getting botulism.

Be Aware

- Food poisoning is caused by a range of microorganisms or their byproducts. Each bug has its own properties and set of symptoms: Some must be alive and present in large quantities to cause harm, while others, such as *E. coli* 0157, can inflict a lethal dose from just a few bacteria.
- Separate raw and cooked foods. Even foods that have been properly cooked can be contaminated if they come in contact with raw foods or implements (knives and cutting boards, for example) that have touched them.
- Drink bottled water when traveling to visit relatives if you are unsure of the safety of the tap water. Avoid ice cubes, as these are usually made with tap water. Check seals on bottles to make sure they are intact: If they are broken, the bottles may have been refilled with tap water.