

Clostridium Perfringens

Inadequate heating or reheating of meats may cause Clostridium perfringens food poisoning.

WHAT IS IT?

Clostridium perfringens is a common type of bacteria. It is frequently found in raw meat, poultry and dehydrated products as well as in human and animal faeces. By forming spores, Clostridium perfringens can survive heat and dehydration.

Clostridium perfringens spores survive normal cooking temperatures and multiply during slow cooling, inadequate reheating and storage at room temperature.

FOOD POISONING

Clostridium perfringens food poisoning may result from eating food contaminated by soil or faeces.

Inadequate heating or reheating of meats (especially stews and meat pies) and meat-based gravies cause most outbreaks of this type of food poisoning.

THE SYMPTOMS

Food poisoning from Clostridium perfringens is usually mild. It occurs when a large quantity of the bacteria is consumed. Symptoms typically include diarrhoea, abdominal cramps and nausea but vomiting is rare.

The symptoms first appear 6 to 24 hours after consuming the contaminated food and may continue for up to 48 hours.

HOW TO AVOID FOOD POISONING

In the kitchen:

- Adjust cooking times and methods to ensure meat is thoroughly cooked;
- Serve hot dishes (especially meat dishes) while still hot from initial cooking or rapidly cool them in a chiller and refrigerate until serving;
- Cool cooked foods rapidly by placing it in shallow containers and placing it in a rapid chiller;
- Ensure food is reheated thoroughly and rapidly;
- Separate raw food from cooked food to prevent bacteria contaminating the cooked food.

Cleaning:

- Ensure the kitchen is hygienically clean at all times. Clean all surfaces and equipment (i.e. cutting boards, knives and all other kitchen tools) and sanitise after use;
- Remove soil and dust from vegetable storage and preparation areas;
- Remove dust from cereals in dry goods store.

Food Handlers:

- Food businesses must ensure that persons suffering from, or who they reasonably suspect is suffering from (or a carrier of) a food borne illness do not handle food where there is a reasonable likelihood of food contamination.
- Past investigations have shown that an ill food handler is a major food poisoning risk. The business may choose to place the person on alternative duties or have them take leave. If the food borne disease has been confirmed, a medical practitioners clearance certificate is required prior to resuming food handling duties.

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SEE ALSO

- Food poisoning - General Information
- Food poisoning - Campylobacter
- Food poisoning - Clostridium botulinum
- Food poisoning - Bacillus cereus
- Food poisoning - Escherichia coli (E.coli)
- Food poisoning - Staphylococcus
- Food poisoning - Listeria monocytogenes
- Food poisoning - Salmonella

CONTACT DETAILS

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