

If you or a member of your household has Food Poisoning

Ensure you and all household members wash their hands thoroughly with warm water and soap;

- After using or cleaning the toilet
- After attending to another person who has diarrhoea / vomiting
- After changing a baby's nappy
- After handling or washing soiled clothes and bedding
- Before eating or preparing food

Ensure each person affected has their own towel for drying hands.

Ensure young children are supervised when washing hands, or have their hands washed for them.

Wash soiled clothes, bedding and towels on a hot cycle of the washing machine. Keep soiled washing separate from the rest of the washing.

Clean toilet seats, flush handles and taps frequently with hot soapy water. The toilet bowl should be cleaned with a toilet brush and disinfectant. Wear rubber gloves to clean the toilet and keep them for this use only.

Where possible stay away from other people until your symptoms have stopped, especially vulnerable people like the elderly and very young. Where possible, do not prepare food for your family or anyone else

NB: If you are using a disinfectant, ensure that it confirms to a British Standard and follow the manufacturer's instructions. Keep all chemical cleaning agents in a safe place away from children.

For further advice or information contact:
*Your Community Infection Control Nurse at your
local Primary Care Trust (PCT),
Your Local Environmental Health Department or
Your local Health Protection Unit*

Information produced by: Health Protection Agency North West

The Health Protection Agency is a new independent organisation dedicated to protecting people's health. It brings together the expertise formerly in a number of official organisations.

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HPA North West



Food Poisoning



Website: <http://www.hpa-nw.org.uk/>

INFORMATION LEAFLET

What is Food Poisoning?

Food poisoning is an illness that occurs after eating or drinking anything that is contaminated.

Usually it is bacteria (germs) on the food that cause illness, but sometimes it can be chemicals, viruses or parasites.

The symptoms depend on what caused the illness but diarrhoea, sickness, stomach pains and sometimes fever are most common.

Illness may last for only a day or continue for one or two weeks.

Who can it affect?

ANYONE - but the very young and the elderly are particularly vulnerable.

How can I tell if food is contaminated?

You can't! Even food which looks and tastes good can cause food poisoning.

How is food poisoning caught?

- By eating raw or undercooked food or food that has been in contact with these
- By swallowing bacteria passed from the bowel of someone who is ill

Do you need to stay off work or school?

YES - until you have been completely free from any symptoms for **48 hours**

Children should not play with other children or attend school or nursery until they are fully recovered and have been symptom free for **48 hours**.

If you work as a food handler, with young children or in healthcare, you must inform your employer and / or seek advice from your Environmental Health Dept.

How do I avoid catching it?

Good food hygiene – the 4 Cs – Cleaning, Cooking, Chilling and Cross contamination

Cleaning – hand washing and keeping work surfaces and utensils clean

- Always wash hands thoroughly with soap and warm water and dry with a clean towel;
 - after going to the toilet
 - after changing a baby's nappy
 - after contact with pets and animals
 - before preparing and eating food
 - after handling raw food

Cooking – Thorough cooking kills food poisoning bacteria.

- Make sure food (especially meat) is cooked right through and piping hot in the middle
- Don't re-heat food more than once

Chilling – Bacteria stop growing or forming toxins at low temperatures

- Read storage labels carefully and follow the instructions
- Cool any leftover food quickly and then keep it in the fridge.

Cross contamination – Where bacteria are passed from one surface to another. This can be direct if for example blood drips from raw meat onto a sandwich or indirectly by the use of unwashed hands, equipment, work surfaces or utensils. To prevent this:

- Wash hands thoroughly after touching raw food
- Keep raw and ready to eat foods apart
- Store meat in sealed containers at the bottom of the fridge
- Use different boards for raw and ready to eat foods
- Clean all knives or other equipment thoroughly after use with raw food

Having a party?

- Follow the advice given in this leaflet.
- Do not prepare food too far in advance. Keep the food either piping hot or refrigerated until it is served.
- Keep the menu simple. The more dishes you prepare, the more likely things are to go wrong.
- If you are giving food to a large number of guests it is best to use commercial caterers, they have equipment to prepare and store large amounts of food safely.