

SUSPECTED FOOD POISONING

Why have you been contacted by the Environmental Health Service ?

We have been advised that you have symptoms which are similar to food poisoning. Whilst this has not been confirmed, we have a legal obligation to investigate causes of food borne illness, and will also advise on precautions that should be taken. We will also investigate any possible source of contamination (e.g. food and food businesses) and try to ensure no further cases occur.

What is Food Poisoning?

Food poisoning is mainly caused by either bacterial or viral infection. Once the bacteria or viruses have been swallowed, they multiply and cause symptoms to develop.

Further information:

Should you require any further information regarding Food Poisoning, please contact:

The Food Safety Section,
Environmental Health Service,
South Holland District Council,
Council Offices, Priory Road,
Spalding, Lincs.
PE11 2XE.

Telephone (01775) 761161.
www.sholland.gov.uk



Where do the bacteria come from and how are they spread ?

- 1) Food Animals (especially cattle, poultry and domestic animals)
- 2) Raw Meat and Poultry
- 3) Raw Milk and Eggs
- 4) Infected Persons

Food poisoning bacteria and viruses will be found in the faeces of human cases and spread can occur via the faecal-oral route by direct person to person contact involving hand to mouth transfer or from contaminated materials and surfaces. Spread also occurs through eating contaminated food or via contaminated kitchen equipment.

SYMPTOMS

These may vary, depending upon the type of illness, but commonly include:

- Vomiting
- Fever
- Diarrhoea
- Headache
- Stomach Pains
- Tired "washed out" feeling

The symptoms may be more severe in the young and the elderly. Sometimes when all the symptoms have disappeared the bacteria / viruses may remain in the gut and thus in the faeces. [This is often termed the "carrier state"]

What should I do to prevent further spread?

Through good hygiene practices you will be able to limit the spread.

1. Good Personal Hygiene

Thorough hand washing (using hot soapy water) each time after using the toilet and immediately prior to any handling, preparation or serving of food. Towels should not be shared. Children must be supervised to thoroughly wash their hands after using the toilet and before eating food. Use disposable towels.

2. Toilet Hygiene

Disinfect the toilet at least once a day, and wipe hand contact points such as toilet seat, door handles and taps etc. with a bleach solution at the correct strength. Disinfection is particularly appropriate after the toilet has been used by an infected person.

3. Soiled Clothing and Bed Linen

This should be washed in a domestic washing machine using the hot cycle. As much faecal material as possible must be flushed down the toilet. Rubber gloves should be worn and hands thoroughly washed afterwards.

4. Pets

Animals can also carry pathogenic bacteria. It is important to keep pets bedding and feeding bowls clean and disinfected. Never wash pets feeding bowls with family dishes or allow your pet to lick from the family dinner plates. It is recommended that any pet that exhibits symptoms are examined by your veterinary surgeon.

5. Food Handlers

Persons working with food or in health care facilities who know or suspect that they, or a member of their household, are suffering from food poisoning symptoms must inform their employers immediately.

6. Adequate Cooking and Storage

Ensure raw foods are properly cooked taking particular care with barbecues. Never store cooked meat beside raw meat. Always store raw meat at the bottom of the fridge to stop it dripping onto other foods.