

# Preventing Foodborne Diseases

Every year more than 76 million people in the U.S. suffer foodborne illnesses. More than 5,000 of those people die from their illness. Below are five of the biggest foodborne diseases, the symptoms, and how you can prevent them.

## Botulism

Botulism is a rare but serious illness caused by botulism toxin (poison). It affects the nerves and if untreated, can cause paralysis and respiratory failure.

One of the biggest culprits of foodborne botulism comes from home-canned foods like asparagus, green beans, beets, and corn. The disease can also be found in more unusual sources like chili peppers, tomatoes, and improperly handled baked potatoes wrapped in aluminum foil.

### Symptoms

- **Double vision and drooping eyelids**
- **Slurred speech**
- **Dry mouth and difficulty swallowing**
- **Weak muscles**

Usually symptoms can begin within 18 to 36 hours but you could see them as early as six hours, or as much as 10 days after eating contaminated food.

### Prevention

- Follow strict hygienic steps when home canning.
- Refrigerate oils with garlic or herbs.
- Keep baked potatoes wrapped in foil hot until served, or refrigerate them.
- Consider boiling home-canned food before eating it, to kill any bacteria that may be inside.

## Campylobacteriosis

Campylobacteriosis is an infectious disease caused by bacteria. It is the leading cause of bacterial diarrheal illness in the U.S., affecting about 2.4 million people every year!

Humans can be infected by handling raw poultry, eating undercooked poultry, drinking non-chlorinated water or raw milk, or handling infected animal or human feces.

### Symptoms

- **Diarrhea (often bloody)**
- **Abdominal cramping and pain**
- **Nausea and vomiting**
- **Fever**
- **Tiredness**

Some infected people have no symptoms. It usually lasts for 2 to 5 days but can last longer.

### Prevention

- Wash hands before preparing food.
- Wash hands immediately after handling raw poultry or other meat.
- Wash all food preparation surfaces and utensils that have come in contact with raw meat thoroughly with soap and hot water.
- Cook poultry products to an internal temperature of 170°F for breast meat and 180°F for thigh meat.
- Drink pasteurized milk & chlorinated or boiled water.
- Wash hands after handling pet feces.

For more information and additional risk management and prevention tools, visit: [fwcruminsurance.com](http://fwcruminsurance.com)

## E. Coli infection

There are harmless strains of E. coli found in nature, but certain types of the bacteria can cause foodborne illness. It can cause bloody diarrhea and even lead to kidney failure in children or people with weakened immune systems.

Some of the most common places the bacteria is found is in hamburgers, salami, lettuce, unpasteurized milk, apple juice, apple cider, and contaminated well water.

### Symptoms

- **Nausea**
- **Severe abdominal cramps**
- **Watery or very bloody diarrhea**
- **Tiredness**
- **Vomiting (occasionally)**

Sometimes people will develop a low grade fever as well. Symptoms usually begin from 2 to 5 days after eating contaminated food and may last for 8 days.

### Prevention

- Eat only thoroughly cooked beef and beef products.
- Cook ground beef patties to an internal temperature of 160°F.
- Avoid unpasteurized juices.
- Drink only pasteurized milk.
- Wash fresh fruits and vegetables thoroughly before eating raw or cooking.

## Salmonellosis

Salmonellosis, or salmonella, can happen in small or large outbreaks. The CDC estimates that 1.4 million people in the U.S. get infected every year and that 1,000 die from it. The elderly, infants, and people with AIDS are vulnerable and have the most severe symptoms.

### Symptoms

- **Diarrhea**
- **Fever**
- **Abdominal cramps**
- **Headache**

Most people will feel symptoms from 12 hours to 3 days after being infected. It usually lasts about 4 to 7 days, but diarrhea can be severe and require hospitalization.

Even if you do not show symptoms, you could still spread the disease by not washing your hands and preparing food for others.

### Prevention

- Drink only pasteurized milk.
- Cook poultry and eggs thoroughly.
- Don't eat foods containing raw eggs, such as homemade Caesar salad dressing, cookie dough, and hollandaise sauce or drink homemade eggnog made with raw eggs.
- Handle raw eggs carefully
- Keep eggs refrigerated.
- Throw away cracked or dirty eggs.
- Cook eggs thoroughly.
- Cook poultry products to an internal temperature of 170°F for breast meat and 180°F for thigh meat.
- Wash hands immediately after handling raw poultry or raw eggs.
- Wash all food preparation surfaces and utensils that have come in contact with raw poultry or raw eggs thoroughly with soap and hot water.
- Wash hands immediately after handling reptiles or contact with animal feces.

## Shigellosis

Shigellosis is an infectious disease caused by bacteria. The CDC estimates more than 400,000 cases occur every year in the U.S.

### Symptoms

- **Fever**
- **Tiredness**
- **Watery or bloody diarrhea**
- **Nausea and vomiting**
- **Abdominal pain**

Symptoms usually begin within 2 days after being exposed and are gone within 5 to 7 days.

### Prevention

- Wash hands thoroughly with soap and water before preparing foods and beverages.
- Wash hands thoroughly after using the bathroom or changing infant diapers.
- Disinfect diaper-changing areas after use.
- Help young children wash their hands carefully after they use the bathroom.
- Avoid swallowing swimming pool water.

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