FOOD SAFETY SERVED HERE

Clostridium perfringens Food Intoxication

What is *Clostridium perfringens* food intoxication?
Well recognized as a cause of "food poisoning" or "foodborne disease", *Clostridium perfringens* (klas-TRIDe-um per-FRIN-jenz) is a toxin-producing bacterium that can cause illness when ingested.

What are the symptoms?
The toxin can cause stomach pain, diarrhea and nausea. Symptoms often begin 6 to 12 hours after ingesting the bacteria. The illness often lasts less than one day. The worst cases can lead to bloody diarrhea and severe pain.

How do I know if I have this illness?
If you have the above symptoms, you should see your family doctor, who can arrange to have your stool sample tested. If you think food may have made you sick, please call your local GSC office.

How does it spread
The bacteria can be found in soil and the feces of some people and animals. People can get sick by consuming food or water that may have come into contact with;

- Animal feces, soil or undercooked meat and poultry.
- Dirty surfaces (unwashed cutting boards).
- Cooked foods kept at room temperature for several hours. Unwashed fruits and vegetables, eaten raw.
- Changing the diapers of infants infected with the bacteria, without proper handwashing.

How is it treated?
Most people who become sick from *Clostridium perfringens* will get better on their own. People with diarrhea must drink plenty of fluids to prevent dehydration. Antibiotics cannot be used to treat this illness.

How can I keep from getting this illness?

- Wash your hands with soap and water before handling foods and eating.
- Wash your hands with soap and water after handling raw meat, poultry, eggs, pets, changing diapers and using the toilet.
- Handle meat dishes carefully:
    - Keep hot foods hot, to at least 60°C (140°F).
    - Chill foods promptly to 4°C (40°F) or less, to prevent the growth of bacteria.
    - Wash cutting boards and counters right away after they touch raw poultry, meat, and eggs.
    - Avoid eating raw or undercooked poultry and meats (see reverse).

How soon can I return to work after being sick?
Usually, you can return to work as soon as you feel well, but certain jobs are more likely to allow the spread of bacteria from workers to clients. For this reason, food handlers, health care workers, and child care providers must stay off work until they are cleared by the Medical Officer of Health.

Food Safety Awareness

Most foodborne illness can be avoided by following these simple food safety tips:

CLEAN:
Wash your hands frequently with soap and water.

- Before handling food or eating.
- After handling raw meats, using the toilet, touching pets/ animals and changing diapers.

Wash counters, utensils, cutting boards, and other surfaces after they come into contact with raw meat.

COOK

- Cook all meats, poultry, and eggs to a proper internal temperature, as listed in the table.
- Keep all hot foods at 60°C (140°F) or more, to prevent the growth of bacteria.
- Use a kitchen thermometer to check cooking and storage temperatures.

Action	Temperature required
Refrigeration	4°C (40°F) or less
Freezing	Minus 18°C (0°F) or less
Cooking	
Food Mixtures containing Poultry, Eggs, Meat, Fish or other potentially hazardous foods	Internal Temperature of 74°C (165°F) for at least 10 minutes
Pork, Lamb, Veal, Beef (whole cuts)	Internal temperature of 70°C (158°F)
Rare Roast Beef	Internal temperature of 63°C (145°F) for 3 minutes
Poultry	Internal temperature of 85°C (185°F) for 15 seconds
Stuffing in Poultry	74°C (165°F)
Ground Meat	71°C (160°F)
Eggs	63°C (145°F) for 15 seconds
Fish	71°C (160°F)
Reheating	74°C (165°F)
Holding Hot Foods	60°C (140°F)
Cooling	60°C (140°F) to 20°C (68°F) within 2 hours 20°C (68°F) to 4°C (40°F) within 4 hours

CHILL

- Chill all leftovers promptly to keep them out of room temperature.
- Refrigerate all perishable foods at 4°C (40°F) or less, to prevent the growth of bacteria.
- Thaw frozen foods in a refrigerator, cold water, or a microwave oven, not at room temperature.

SEPARATE

- Use separate cutting boards for raw meats, and raw fruits and vegetables.
- Store raw meats below ready-to-eat foods, on lower refrigerator shelves, to prevent Contamination caused by dripping.

Newfoundland Labrador

Department of Health and Community Services
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