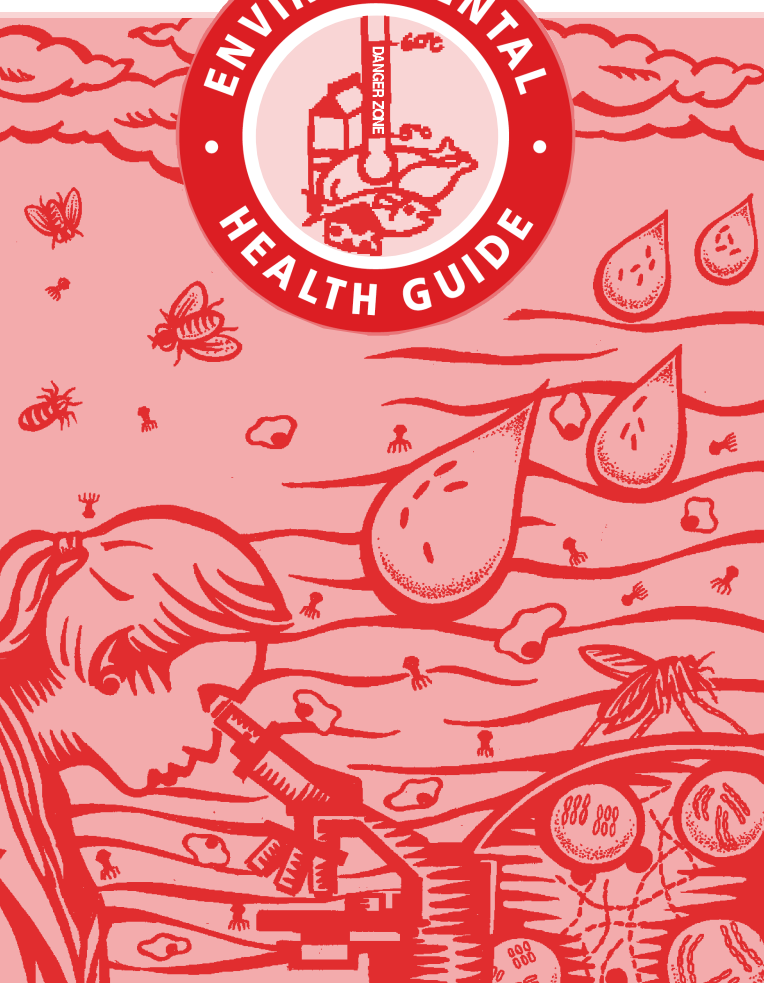
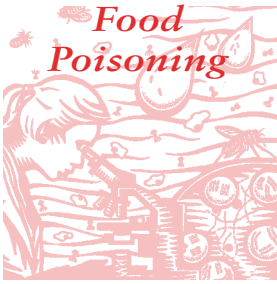


# *Food Poisoning*





## Food Poisoning

## What is food poisoning?

Food poisoning is any illness caused by eating food. Allergies, heavy metals, viruses and chemicals can all cause food poisoning. However, the main cause of food poisoning is bacteria.

Not all bacteria are harmful: some are used to make foods such as cheese, yogurt and beer.

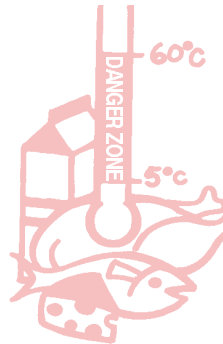
Bacteria capable of causing serious illness grow best at body temperature ( $37^{\circ}\text{C}$ ) but can grow at temperatures between  $5^{\circ}\text{C}$  and  $60^{\circ}\text{C}$ .

This temperature range is known as the 'temperature danger zone'.

## Symptoms of food poisoning

The symptoms of food poisoning depend on the bacteria causing the illness. Some or all of the following symptoms are associated with food poisoning:

- \* nausea
- \* diarrhoea
- \* vomiting
- \* stomach pains
- \* sweating/fever
- \* headache



Vomiting and diarrhoea can lead to dehydration and possibly death. Dehydration is especially dangerous for infants and the elderly.

Pregnant women need to be particularly careful when choosing and preparing food as *Listeria* infection can result in miscarriage and stillbirth. (For more information see *Listeria Infection and Pregnancy* leaflet.)

The time between eating contaminated food and the start of symptoms is called the onset time and varies depending on the bacteria causing the disease.

## *To protect your food*

Bacteria cannot move on their own — they must be carried from one place to another. Bacteria are spread by poor food handling practices or by contact with pets, flies or other pests.

To protect your food:

- ✧ *Keep high-risk food out of the temperature danger zone*
- ✧ *Always store hot foods above 60°C and cold foods below 5°C*
- ✧ *Cook food thoroughly*
- ✧ *Store cooked and raw food separately*
- ✧ *Wash your hands before handling food*



## *Types of food poisoning*

	<b>SALMONELLA</b>
Origins	Bowel, intestine of humans and animals (especially chickens), raw foods, untreated water
Onset	Up to 48 hours.
Symptoms	Nausea, stomach cramps, diarrhoea, fever and headache for 3-21 days.

### STAPHYLOCOCCUS AUREUS

Origins	Skin, nose, saliva, bowel of humans.
Onset	1-8 hours.
Symptoms	Diarrhoea, nausea and vomiting. Last for about 24 hours.

### CLOSTRIDIUM PERFRINGENS

Origins	Soil, bowel, intestine of humans and animals.
Onset	8-12 hours.
Symptoms	Stomach pains, diarrhoea and sometimes nausea and vomiting. Last for about 24 hours.

### VIBRIO PARAHAEMOLYTICUS

Origins	Drinking water, shellfish and fish.
Onset	12-24 hours.
Symptoms	Diarrhoea, stomach cramps, sometimes nausea and vomiting

### LISTERIA MONOCYTOGENES

Origins	Soil, bowel, intestine of humans and animals, raw vegetables, processed foods
Onset	2 days to 3 months.
Symptoms	Flu-like symptoms: fever, headaches and pains. May cause miscarriage and stillbirth.

### CAMPYLOBACTER

Origins	Raw poultry, raw meats, untreated water, unpasteurised milk and puppies, kittens, wild animals and birds.
Onset	2-5 days.
Symptoms	Diarrhoea, abdominal pain, vomiting, fever and nausea. Last for 2-5 days.

## *What should I do?*

If you have any of the symptoms of food poisoning:

- ✧ *Consult your family doctor. Make a list of all foods eaten in the last 48 hours.*
- ✧ *Drink plenty of water to avoid dehydration.*
- ✧ *Report your illness to your local authority Environmental Health Officer. Prompt investigation may prevent other people from suffering.*
- ✧ *Refrigerate any foods suspected of having caused the illness. They may be needed for further analysis to determine what caused your illness.*
- ✧ *As far as possible do not handle or prepare food while you have symptoms.*
- ✧ *Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and hot water before handling food.*
- ✧ *If you work in the food industry notify your employer.*



## *Other leaflets available*

Food Safety for Consumers

Campylobacter Gastroenteritis

Listeria Infection and Pregnancy

Lunchboxes

## *Further information*

For further information contact your local  
government Environmental Health Officer

or

Food Safety, Environmental Health Service

PO Box 8172, Stirling St

PERTH WA 6849

Telephone: (08) 9388 4999

Facsimile: (08) 9388 4955

<http://www.public.health.wa.gov.au>



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