

## **Prevention of food poisoning and food borne diseases**

1. Always wash your hands before eating or preparing food.
2. Always wash your hands thoroughly after going to the toilet and after handling raw foods
3. Always wash your hands after touching pets and animals, especially if they are ill.
4. Never let raw foods come in contact with cooked foods. Always ensure that cooked foods are stored above raw foods in your fridge and that the raw foods are in sealed containers.
5. Work surfaces, utensils and kitchen equipment must be thoroughly washed and disinfected after being used for raw foods. A range of kitchen surface cleaners that also kill germs are available from most supermarkets.
6. Ensure frozen meat, especially poultry, is thoroughly defrosted before it is cooked, and then cooked thoroughly.
7. Never use raw eggs in products that are not to be cooked and avoid eating eggs with runny yolks; this is especially important for the young and the elderly. Store eggs in the fridge and use by the date on the box.
8. Once food is cooked, serve immediately or chill rapidly (within one and half hours) and place within the refrigerator (which should be less than 5°C).

## **Giving a Sample**

If requested, please try to provide a stool sample as soon as possible.

Samples are required to identify the illness correctly and to check whether the germs are still present. You can feel better but still have the germs which can be passed onto others.

You will be given a plastic pot with a spatula inside.

- Write your full name, date of birth and the sample date on the side of the pot
- The spatula should be used to scrape up some of the solid matter when you go to the toilet. (This is best achieved by placing a potty or similar item in the toilet. Disinfect the container carefully after use).
- A small amount will be enough, so please do not fill the pot.
- The spatula and solid matter should be put into the pot and the lid screwed down firmly.
- Place the pot into the plastic bag

Please do not supply any urine, vomit or water.

Results will normally be available within 5 working days, but some tests take longer.

**Further information is available from your local Environmental Health Department, the Health Protection Team, or your doctor.**

# **Suffering from Food Poisoning or Diarrhoea**

## **Advice for people suffering with food poisoning or diarrhoea**

**If you are suffering from diarrhoea and/or vomiting or are in contact with a sufferer, it is important that you read this leaflet.**

**If you work with food, the young, or the elderly please also read the appropriate section on the back page.**

This advice is produced by Plymouth City Council Environmental Health Officers in consultation with other local authorities, local doctors and the Devon Health Protection Team (01803 861833).

Local Environmental Health Officers can be contacted as follows:

East Devon	01395 517457	Teignbridge	01626 215409
Exeter	01392 265433	Torbay	01803 208010
Mid Devon	01884 244600	Torridge	01237 428700
North Devon	01271 388870	Plymouth	01752 304141
South Hams	01803 861234	West Devon	01822 813600

### **What causes it food poisoning or diarrhoea?**

People suffer from diarrhoea (with or without vomiting) for a number of different reasons. This leaflet deals only with infectious causes, which are bacteria (such as salmonella or campylobacter), parasites (such as cryptosporidium or giardia) and viruses (such as norovirus, previously known as Norwalk).

### **How These Germs Spread**

The bacteria, parasites and viruses that cause diarrhoea and vomiting may be spread by:

- A sufferer to other people through physical contact with faecal soiling on hands.
- Infected food
- Contaminated surfaces
- The environment, such as untreated faecally contaminated water, or animal faeces.
- Animals

## General Advice

### 1. Personal hygiene

Pay particular attention to your personal hygiene during and after your illness. You can still be carrying the germ for some weeks after your symptoms have finished.

#### Hand Washing

Wash and dry hands regularly using soap (preferably a liquid soap) and your own towel. Use the wash hand basin and not the kitchen sink. Always wash hands after using the toilet and before handling food.

### 2. Preparation of food at home

If you do not need to handle or prepare food, then you should avoid doing so until 48 hours after you have fully recovered. If you have to handle or prepare food, then it is essential that you wash and dry your hands using soap and a separate towel before doing so.

### 3. Contact with other people

You should avoid contact with other people until 48hrs after you have fully recovered if possible. Tell anyone nursing you or sharing your home that you are suffering with diarrhoea and show them these guidelines. Affected children should not go to school or nursery, or play with others until at least 48 hours after full recovery.

### 4. Hygiene at Home

If possible reserve one toilet for the use of the sick person only.

Regularly clean the toilet (including top and underside of seat), taps and door handle of bathroom/toilet with detergent and wipe down with a disinfectant.

Do not wash or rinse off soiled underwear in the kitchen sink. Use the washing machine, if possible on a hot cycle.

### 5. Those with suspected or confirmed food poisoning or food borne diseases

Environmental Health staff will contact people suffering from suspected or confirmed food poisoning or food borne illnesses to:

- Give advice on how to prevent spreading the infection to others.
- Find out where they caught the illness.

If you have not been contacted by a member of the Environmental Health Department within 48 hours of your GP confirming the type of food poisoning or food borne illness you are suffering from, then please contact your local department on the telephone numbers given on the front page.

### 6. Treatment

There is usually no specific treatment; antibiotics are not usually prescribed. **Your pharmacist can advise you** about re-hydration fluids and medicines to stop diarrhoea. It is important to drink enough. Try small amounts of clear fluids for 24 hours, avoid solid food and milk, and introduce soft, bland foods such as dry biscuits in small amounts. Once your bowel motions are more solid, you can start eating your usual diet. Avoid fruit and foods that contain roughage such as bran, until your diarrhoea has stopped.

If your symptoms persist or there is also severe pain, or blood in your bowel motions, call your GP or NHS Direct (0845 4647).

**If your symptoms persist or you get worse, please see your Doctor.**

### **Additional Information for people who work with food, the elderly or the young**

Please contact the Environmental Health staff immediately (please see front page for details) who will give advice on the prevention of spreading the infection to others.

1. If you work with food, the elderly or the young, then you should:-

- Notify your employer immediately.
- Stay away from work until you have not had any vomiting and or diarrhoea (and are completely back to normal) for 48 hours.
- **If you have taken anti-diarrhoeal drugs, you should stay away from work for at least 48 hours after you have finished treatment and return only if your diarrhoea has not recurred.**

2. Inform your employer before you return to work.

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