



Hawaii State Department of Health

Disease Investigation Branch

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Yersiniosis

What is yersiniosis?

Yersiniosis is a disease caused by bacteria called *Yersinia enterocolitica* that produces fever, diarrhea (often bloody), and right-sided stomach pain that seems like appendicitis. It occurs most often in small children.

How do you get it?

You get yersiniosis by eating contaminated food, especially raw or undercooked pork. Drinking milk or water contaminated with wastes from infected persons, farm animals, or household pets (especially sick puppies and kittens) can also cause illness. Person-to-person spread is rare.

What are the symptoms of yersiniosis?

The main symptoms of yersiniosis are fever, nausea, abdominal pain, and diarrhea, which may be bloody. Other symptoms may include painful joints, headache, eye pain, throat pain when swallowing, loss of appetite, and vomiting.

When do symptoms start?

Symptoms usually start 4 to 7 days after infection with the bacteria.

For how long is a person contagious?

An infected person is contagious for at least as long as the symptoms last. Some people with yersiniosis continue to be infectious for weeks or months, even after the diarrhea has ended.

What is the treatment for yersiniosis?

Most persons get well on their own without treatment. Severe infections and infections in young children with diarrhea can be treated with medicines prescribed by a doctor.

How do you keep from getting it?

Do not eat raw or undercooked pork.

Eat and drink only pasteurized dairy products.

Wash hands with soap and water before eating and preparing food, after contact with animals, and after using the toilet.

Keep food that will be eaten raw, such as vegetables, from becoming contaminated by animal products. Do not lick your fingers, touch other foods, or smoke a cigarette before washing your hands after handling raw meat.

Wash cutting boards thoroughly after contact with each food, so that the boards do not contaminate the next food prepared.

Dispose of dog and cat wastes promptly in a sanitary manner.

Protect water supplies from animal and human feces.

For more information, see the CDC's website at

http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dbmd/diseaseinfo/yersinia_g.htm