

What's Bugging You?

Food poisoning is no fun. In most cases, **your body will heal itself as long as you drink plenty of fluids until the GI problems clear up.** Sometimes, though, you're going to need medical help, especially if you're older, have a weakened immune system, or have severe or long-lasting symptoms. (Infants and pregnant women are also more likely to have a serious bout.) Here are the bacteria, toxins, viruses, and parasites in food that are most likely to make you sick and the symptoms they typically cause. 🍌

	How soon you typically get sick	How long sickness typically lasts	Diarrhea	Vomiting	Fever	Abdominal pain	Other symptoms	Possible complications	WHAT TO DO
<i>Bacillus cereus</i>	4-16 hours	12-24 hours	✓	✓		✓			Stay hydrated
<i>Campylobacter jejuni</i>	2-5 days	2-10 days	✓ (may be bloody)	Sometimes		✓		Guillain-Barré Syndrome	Stay hydrated
Ciguatera	6-24 hours	1 day-3 weeks	✓	✓			Numbness and tingling in hands and around mouth, pain and weakness in legs	Chronic ciguatera syndrome, which can last for months to years	Get medical help
<i>Clostridium botulinum</i>	2 hours-4 days	Weeks (months in severe cases)	Sometimes	Sometimes			Blurred vision, difficulty swallowing, slurred speech, dry mouth, respiratory failure	Long-term hospitalization in severe cases	Get medical help immediately
<i>Clostridium perfringens</i>	8-24 hours	1-2 days	✓						Stay hydrated
Cyclospora	7-10 days	May come and go for months	✓	Rare	Rare		Loss of appetite, weight loss, bloating, increased gas, fatigue		Get medical help
Enterotoxigenic <i>E. coli</i>	8-44 hours	3-7 days or more	✓	✓					Stay hydrated
<i>E. coli</i> O157:H7	1-9 days	2-9 days	✓ (bloody)	✓		✓		Kidney failure from hemolytic uremic syndrome	Get medical help immediately
<i>Listeria monocytogenes</i> (mild illness)	9-48 hours	Days to weeks	✓	✓	✓		Flu-like symptoms	Spontaneous abortions, stillbirths	Stay hydrated. If pregnant, get medical help immediately
<i>Listeria monocytogenes</i> (severe invasive disease)	3-90 days	Days to weeks			✓		Headache, stiff neck, muscle ache, loss of balance, confusion	Meningitis, sepsis (blood infection)	Get medical help
Noroviruses	24-48 hours	12-72 hours	✓	✓	✓		Malaise		Stay hydrated
<i>Salmonella</i>	12-72 hours	4-5 days	✓	✓	✓	✓	Chills, nausea, pain in the joints, headache, muscle pain, malaise	Reactive arthritis, irritable bowel syndrome	Stay hydrated. Get medical help for severe illness
<i>Shigella</i>	1-4 days	4-7 days	✓ (may be bloody)						Get medical help
<i>Staphylococcus aureus</i>	2-4 hours	Less than 48 hours	✓	✓					Stay hydrated
<i>Vibrio parahaemolyticus</i>	4 hours-4 days	2-6 days	✓	✓		✓			Stay hydrated
<i>Yersinia</i>	24-48 hours	2 days-3 weeks	✓			✓	May mimic appendicitis	Reactive arthritis	Stay hydrated

Sources: J. Glenn Morris, CDC, FDA, and CSPI.