

YERSINIOSIS

What is Yersiniosis?

Yersiniosis is a diarrheal illness caused by one of the *Yersinia* species bacteria. Persons with yersiniosis usually have diarrhea, fever, and abdominal pain.

Who gets yersiniosis?

Anyone can get yersiniosis if they become infected with *Yersinia* bacteria.

How is yersiniosis spread?

You get yersiniosis by eating or drinking food or water that are contaminated with *Yersinia* bacteria. A person who has yersiniosis may also infect other people directly through the fecal-oral route.

While many animals carry *Yersinia* bacteria, the two animals that are most commonly infected are pigs and rodents. One food that has frequently been found to be contaminated with *Yersinia* bacteria is raw pork intestines or chitterlings. Raw or unpasteurized milk has also been found to be contaminated with *Yersinia*.

What are the symptoms of yersiniosis?

Nearly everyone who has yersiniosis will have diarrhea, fever and abdominal pain. Older children and adults may develop severe abdominal pain that resembles appendicitis (inflammation of the appendix). Some adults may develop arthritis (inflammation of the joints) after they have gotten over the diarrhea.

How soon after exposure do symptoms appear?

Abdominal symptoms can occur 1-14 days after infection.

How is yersiniosis diagnosed?

Yersiniosis is diagnosed by isolating *Yersinia* bacteria from the person who is believed to be infected. The bacteria are most frequently isolated from stool cultures, but they may also be isolated from other sources, including throat swabs, lymph nodes, and blood.

What is the treatment for yersiniosis?

Doctors can prescribe antibiotics for yersiniosis.

How can yersiniosis be prevented?

Pork and all meat products should be cooked thoroughly before they are eaten. People who are preparing meats should be very careful to wash their hands thoroughly after handling these foods, and especially before handling any other foods or drinks. People who are preparing raw pork intestines (or chitterlings) need to be particularly careful. People should also avoid drinking raw or unpasteurized milk.

Where can I get more information?

- Your personal doctor.
- Your local health department listed in your telephone directory.
- The Utah Department of Health, Bureau of Epidemiology (801) 538-6191.

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