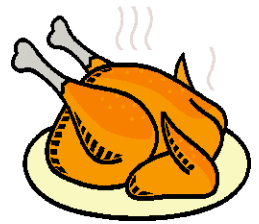


## Food Poisoning: Helpful Hints

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Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimate 76 million Americans sustain a food-borne illness and approximately 5,000 of these people die. The CDC reports most cases are a result of parasites, viruses, and bacteria rather than by poisoning from toxins and chemicals. Diagnosing food-caused illness can be difficult because symptoms are similar to those associated with stomach viruses: diarrhea, vomiting, nausea, abdominal cramps, and fever. Further complicating matters is the fact that symptoms may not begin for several hours, days and sometimes weeks but on average symptoms of food borne illness begin within 1 to 2 days after eating the food in question.



People susceptible to severe illness or death from contaminated food are those who have impaired immune systems, elderly, very young, and pregnant women. It is recommended these high at risk-groups should seek early treatment rather than rely on self-care.

### **See your health care provider if the following signs are present.**

- Persistent vomiting or diarrhea lasting longer than 1 to 3 days
- Bloody feces or vomit
- Temperature above 101.5 F
- Dehydration, dry mouth and throat, decreased urination, and dizziness when standing
- Severe abdominal pain
- Double vision, ptosis (drooping eyelids), dilated pupils, drooling, and difficulty swallowing

Healthy individuals with mild nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, cramps, and low grade fevers (<101F) lasting less than a day can usually manage these symptoms by consuming a clear liquid diet, getting rest, and monitoring body temperatures with a thermometer.



**REMEMBER:** Food-borne infections are preventable so wash hands properly and follow established safe food handling practices. If you have any questions or experience a poisoning, please call our bilingual Nurse/Pharmacist Specialist in Poison Information at our 24-hour /365-day Thomason Hospital's West Texas Regional Poison Center at **1-800-222-1222**.



**POISON**  
**Help**  
**1-800-222-1222**