



Kanawha-Charleston Health Department Important Health Information for the Public: **Foodborne Illnesses (Food Poisoning)**

Foodborne illness is a common yet preventable public health problem. Each year, 1 in 6 Americans gets sick by consuming contaminated foods or beverages. Many different disease-causing microbes, or pathogens, can contaminate foods, leading to different types of foodborne infections. Salmonella, campylobacter and giardia are three of the more common infections.

Salmonella

Salmonellosis is an infection of the gastrointestinal tract. People infected with the bacteria may develop diarrhea, fever, and abdominal cramps 12 to 72 hours after infection. The illness usually lasts 4 to 7 days, and most persons recover without treatment.



Salmonella is usually transmitted to humans by eating foods contaminated with infected animal feces. Contaminated foods usually look and smell normal. Contaminated foods are often of animal origin, such as beef, poultry, milk, or eggs, but any food, including vegetables, may become contaminated. It can also be transmitted from handling live animals such as chickens, reptiles and pets.

For more information, check out the following CDC website: [General Salmonella Information.](#)

Campylobacter

Campylobacteriosis is an infectious disease caused by bacteria and people infected with the bacteria may experience diarrhea, cramping, abdominal pain, and fever within two to five days after

exposure. The illness typically lasts one week and most persons recover without any treatment. Some people infected with the bacteria may not exhibit symptoms.

Most cases of campylobacter are associated with eating raw or undercooked poultry meat or from cross-contamination of other foods by these items. It also associated with contact with live animals like chickens, cattle, puppies and kittens.



For more information, check out the following CDC website: [General Campylobacter Information.](#)

Giardia

Giardiasis is a microscopic parasite that causes diarrheal illness and is found on surfaces or in soil, food, or water that has been contaminated with feces from infected humans or animals. Symptoms include diarrhea, stomach or abdominal cramps and upset stomach or nausea and starts about 1-3 weeks after becoming infected. These symptoms usually last between 2-6 weeks and most people recover without any treatment.

Giardia is usually transmitted from coming in contact with contaminated surfaces, drinking water that may be contaminated with the parasite or by eating uncooked or contaminated food.

For more information, check out the following CDC website: [General Giardia Information](#).

Prevention

These three foodborne illnesses can all be prevented by following proper hand washing hygiene as well as properly washing, cooking and storing uncooked meats and poultry. For more information about proper food safety, click on the following link: [Summertime Food Safety](#).



If you have questions or would like additional information, you can visit our website at www.kchdvw.org, e-mail epi@kchdvw.org, or call the Division of Epidemiology at (304) 348-1088.