



Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
Saudi Food & Drug Authority



Food Poisoning



Food poisoning, also known as foodborne illness, is caused by eating contaminated food. Infectious germs, including bacteria, viruses, and parasites, and their toxins, are the most common causes of food poisoning.



How does it happen?

Food contamination may occur at any stage of food production such as: farming, harvesting, processing, storage, shipment or preparation. Contamination can also occur at home if food is prepared or cooked incorrectly. Contaminated foods usually look and smell normal.



What are the symptoms?

Signs and symptoms may begin within hours, days, or even weeks after eating a contaminated food, and they last from several hours to several days.

The symptoms vary, depending on the source of contamination. The most common symptoms associated with food poisoning are the following:

- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Watery or bloody diarrhea
- Abdominal pain and cramps
- Fever



Facts

- Every year, **one in 10 people around the world** develops food poisoning after eating contaminated food, resulting in the death of more than 420,000 people.
- **More than 200 diseases may be** caused by eating food contaminated with bacteria, viruses, parasites, or chemicals such as heavy metals.



Which group is most at risk?

Anyone can get a foodborne illness. However, some people have a higher risk, such as pregnant women, young children, the elderly and those with compromised immune systems.



How to prevent it?

To avoid food poisoning at home:

Wash your hands, kitchen utensils and food contact surfaces frequently

Separate raw foods from ready-to-eat foods

Cook foods to safe temperatures

Defrost food safely. Do not thaw food at room temperature. The safest way to thaw food is to defrost in the refrigerator

Refrigerate or freeze perishable foods immediately

Throw away food if you suspect its safety

