



CLOSTRIDIUM PERFRINGENS FACT SHEET

WHAT IS CLOSTRIDIUM PERFRINGENS?

C. perfringens is one of the most common types of foodborne illness in the U.S. Certain strains of this bacteria produce a toxin in the intestine that causes illness. Complications from C. perfringens occur when food is left at an unsafe temperature and bacteria multiply in the food prior to consumption.

WHAT ARE THE COMMON FOOD SOURCES OF C.PERFRINGENS?

- Beef, poultry, gravies and dried or pre-cooked foods are common sources of C. perfringens infections
- C. perfringens infection often occurs when foods are prepared in large quantities and kept warm for a long time before serving

SYMPTOMS

- People infected with C. perfringens typically develop diarrhea and abdominal cramps within 6 to 24 hours.
- The illness usually begins suddenly and typically lasts for less than 24 hours. The very young, the elderly and immunocompromised individuals are most at risk of C. perfringens infection and can experience more severe symptoms that may last for 1 to 2 weeks.
- The illness is not passed from person to person.

TREATMENT

Fluids and electrolyte replacement can be used to prevent or treat dehydration. Antibiotics are not recommended. Discuss treatment options with your doctor.

PREVENTION

- Cook and keep food at the correct temperature. Food should be cooked to a safe internal temperature, and then kept at 140°F (60° C) or warmer. Meat dishes should be served hot, within 2 hours after cooking.
- Refrigerate leftovers and reheat them properly. Leftover foods should be refrigerated at 40°F or colder as soon as possible and within 2 hours of preparation
- When in doubt, throw it out. Foods that have dangerous bacteria in them may not taste, smell or look different. Any food that has been left out for too long may be dangerous to eat, even if it looks acceptable

DPHD EFFORTS:

Reports of suspected and confirmed cases of disease are made to the Delaware Public Health District. The Health District investigates potential sources of illness, conducts surveillance for the spread of disease, and engages in community outreach and education.