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Fight Off Food Poisoning Food Safety for Warmer Weather

July 2014

En español Send us your comments ■

In warm-weather months, who

doesn't love to get outside for picnics, backyard gatherings,

your chance of getting sick from

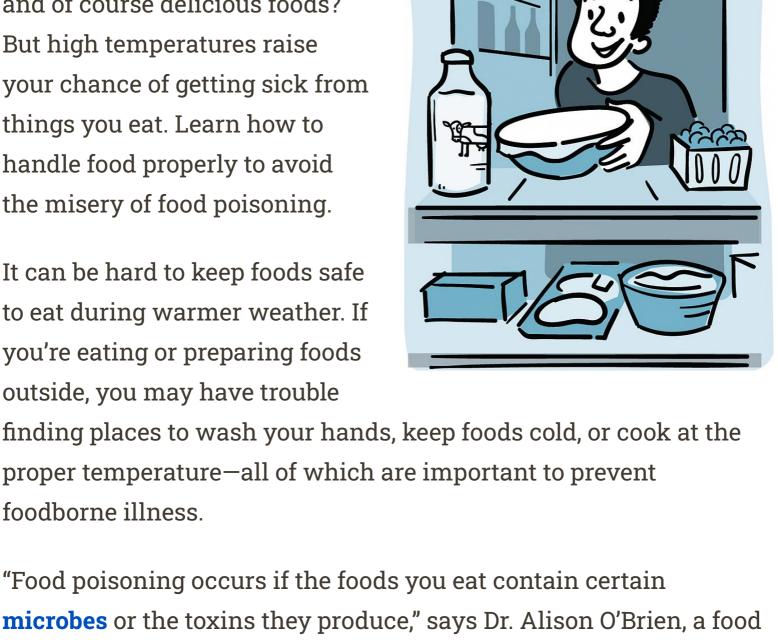
and of course delicious foods?

But high temperatures raise

things you eat. Learn how to handle food properly to avoid the misery of food poisoning. It can be hard to keep foods safe to eat during warmer weather. If you're eating or preparing foods outside, you may have trouble proper temperature—all of which are important to prevent foodborne illness.

systems are especially at risk.

food is served.



Sciences in Maryland. "You can get sick directly from swallowing the toxins. Or you can get sick if the microbes get into your gut and start to multiply." Each year, about 1 in 6 Americans get sick from tainted foods. Most

foodborne illnesses arise suddenly and last only a short time. But

Foodborne diseases kill about 3,000 people nationwide each year.

food poisoning sometimes leads to more serious problems.

Infants, older people, and those with compromised immune

Many people know the symptoms of food poisoning: vomiting,

safety expert at the Uniformed Services University of the Health

or severe. It may last from a few hours to several days. The symptoms and length of illness depend on the type of diseasecausing microbe or toxin you've swallowed. The leading cause of foodborne disease outbreaks in the U.S. is norovirus. This highly contagious virus sickens more than 20

diarrhea. Norovirus outbreaks can occur anywhere people gather or

"You can get norovirus when a sick food handler contaminates your

touching the virus," O'Brien says. "Swallowing just a little norovirus

million people nationwide each year, leading to vomiting and

food, possibly by not washing their hands well enough after

diarrhea, abdominal pain, fever, or chills. The sickness may be mild

can make you very sick." Several types of bacteria can also cause food poisoning. Some foods you buy—such as raw meat or fruits and vegetables—may already contain bacteria that you need to wash off or cook to destroy. Bacteria can also thrive in certain foods if not stored properly.

Bacteria like Staph and Bacillus cereus can make you sick quickly,

within 1 to 7 hours. These bacteria produce fast-acting toxins in

for *B. cereus*). Keeping such foods refrigerated at 40 °F or colder

helps slow or stop the growth of these bacteria.

should have the child seen by a doctor."

Wise Choices

Wash your hands for at

least 20 seconds with

seafood, meats, and

temperature, see

Foodsafety.gov.

seafood, and their

foods.

Keep raw meat, poultry,

juices away from other

Keep hot foods hot and

Promptly refrigerate

foods that can spoil.

dairy foods, including

pasteurized eggs and

Use only pasteurized

egg products.

Report suspected

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cold foods cold.

eggs. For safe cooking

Prevent Food Poisoning

foods (such as meat or dairy for Staph, and starchy foods like rice

Other bacteria, such as Salmonella and Campylobacter, don't make you sick until they get in your body and multiply. With these microbes, it can take 12 hours or a few days for you to feel ill. "Symptoms can include fever, cramps, and sometimes bloody diarrhea," says O'Brien.

When you have a foodborne illness, you usually need to drink

plenty of fluids. "But see a doctor if you have blood in your stool,"

O'Brien advises. "And if a child seems to have food poisoning, you

Foodborne Diseases soapy water before and after handling food What is Foodborne and after using the bathroom. Report Food Wash fruits and **Poisoning** vegetables. Avoid undercooked

- foodborne illness to your local health department to help officials identify and stop potential outbreaks. Get details at Foodsafety.gov ₽.
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