

Food Poisoning

Food poisoning occurs from bacterial growth in meat, fish, or dairy products that have been allowed to stand at room temperature or in the outside heat for several hours before eating.



To reduce your risk of food poisoning,

1. **wash** your hands, utensils, and all food-preparation areas carefully.
2. **don't** use plates or utensils that held raw meat or seafood for any other purpose, unless they have been washed in hot, soapy water.
3. **marinate** food in the refrigerator, not on a counter, and don't reuse marinade after it has been in contact with raw meat or seafood.
4. **cook** food thoroughly and use a food thermometer.
5. **keep** cold foods in a cooler, at a temperature of 40 degrees or lower.
6. **don't** leave food sitting out for more than an hour in temperatures above 90 degrees, and do not keep perishable food out longer than 2 hours.

Food poisoning symptoms include nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea which may last for 12-24 hours. Drink plenty of fluids and do not take medicine for diarrhea. This is how the body gets rid of the bacteria. People with prolonged symptoms or difficulty maintaining fluid intake should see a doctor.

Prepared salads like potato and pasta salads are common culprits. Make sure all raw vegetables and fruits are washed well before eating. Chilled foods should be kept in a cooler until serving and returned to the cooler immediately after eating. Hot foods should be kept hot until serving and then put into the cooler after eating.



A good rule of thumb is, "If in doubt, throw it out."

Call **Carolinas Poison Center** at **1-800-222-1222** if you think you have been exposed to food poisoning or for more information.