

# Clostridium Perfringens Fact Sheet

## What is Clostridium Perfringens?

This is an intestinal disorder characterised by sudden onset of colic followed by diarrhoea and nausea, vomiting and fever are sometimes present. Generally, it is a mild illness of short duration, usually one or two days.

## Transmission

Ingestion of food which has been contaminated by soil or faeces and then held under conditions which permit the organisms to multiply. Most cases are caused by inadequate heating of meats, usually stews, pies and gravy made from beef, turkey or chicken.

Spores survive normal cooking temperatures, germinate and multiply during slow cooling, storage at ambient temperatures and/or inadequate re-warming.

## Incubation period

The incubation period is from 6 - 24 hours, usually 10 - 12 hours.

## Method of control

- Educate food handlers on the risks involved in large scale cooking, especially meat dishes.
- Serve meat dishes hot as soon as they are cooked, or cook rapidly and store in a refrigerator until serving time and re-heating if necessary.
- Ensure large cuts of meat are thoroughly cooked.

## Treatment

There is no specific treatment, except exclude from school or work while symptoms persist.

Always maintain good standards of personal hygiene to prevent cross-contamination.

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