

Yersiniosis (*Yersinia* infection)

What is yersiniosis?

Yersiniosis is an infection of the intestines of people and animals. It is caused by a bacteria (germ) called *Yersinia enterocolitica*. These germs are found in the bowel movement (stool) of infected people and animals (especially pigs) and in contaminated water and foods.

What are the symptoms?

Symptoms usually begin 1 to 4 days after becoming infected and may last 4 to 7 days, and may include:

In Children,

- Diarrhea (Sometimes bloody)
- Fever
- Abdominal pain

In Adults,

- Right-sided abdominal pain (mimicking appendicitis)
- Fever

How is it spread?

- Eating raw or undercooked pork products.
- Handling raw pork intestines (chitterlings).
- Consuming raw milk or milk products.
- Swallowing untreated water (e.g. lakes, rivers, springs, streams, ponds).
- Having contact with an infected animal.
- Not washing hands after using the bathroom or cleaning up animal stool.

Who gets yersiniosis?

Anyone can get yersiniosis. Those who travel internationally are more likely to develop infection.

Infants, young children, the elderly, and those immunocompromised are at greater risk to develop serious complications.

What should I do if I have symptoms?

- Contact your healthcare provider.

How is yersiniosis diagnosed?

- By testing a stool sample.

How is yersiniosis treated?

- Most people who have healthy immune systems will recover without treatment.

How can I prevent the spread of yersiniosis?

- Do not eat raw or undercooked pork products.
- Cook pork to an internal temperature of 160 F.
- Consume only pasteurized milk and milk products.
- After handling chitterlings, wash hands well before touching infants, their bottles and pacifiers.
- Prevent cross contamination in the kitchen:
 - Use separate cutting boards for meats and other foods.
 - Clean and sanitize cutting boards, counter tops, and utensils.
- Do not prepare food for others.
- Do not swallow untreated water.
- Wash your hands with warm, soapy water for 20 seconds:
 - After handling raw meat, especially pork.
 - After using the bathroom or changing diapers.
 - After touching animals or their stool.
 - Before eating or preparing food.
- Assist young children with hand washing.
- Do not send your child to daycare or preschool if he or she has diarrhea.
- Do not go to work if you are a healthcare worker, food handler or a daycare worker.

For further information visit:

- www.foodsafety.gov

Report yersiniosis cases to Saint Louis County Department of Health by calling 314 615 1630