

Food Borne Diseases: Understanding the Risks, Causes, and Prevention

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DESCRIPTION

Food borne diseases, also known as food poisoning or food-borne illnesses, are caused by consuming contaminated food or water. These diseases can be caused by bacteria, viruses, parasites, and toxins. Food borne illnesses affect millions of people around the world each year, resulting in significant morbidity and mortality. The purpose of this article is to provide an overview of food borne diseases, their causes, risks, symptoms, and prevention.

Causes of food borne diseases

There are several causes of food borne diseases. The most common causes are bacteria, viruses, parasites, and toxins. Bacteria are the most common cause of food poisoning. The most common bacteria that cause food poisoning include *Salmonella*, *Campylobacter*, *E. coli*, and *Listeria*. These bacteria can contaminate food at any stage, including during production, processing, transportation, and storage. Viruses such as Norovirus and Hepatitis A can also be transmitted through contaminated food and water. Parasites such as *Cryptosporidium* and *Giardia* are also responsible for food borne diseases. These parasites are usually found in contaminated water and can cause illness when ingested.

Toxins are another cause of food borne illnesses. These toxins are produced by certain types of bacteria and can cause serious illness. For example, botulism is caused by the toxin produced by *Clostridium botulinum* bacteria. This toxin can cause paralysis and even death if not treated immediately.

Risks of food borne diseases

Anyone can get a food borne disease, but certain groups are more susceptible to illness. The elderly, young children, pregnant women, and people with weakened immune systems are at a higher risk of getting food poisoning. People with chronic diseases such as diabetes, kidney disease, and liver disease are also at a higher risk of getting food borne illnesses.

Symptoms of food borne diseases

The symptoms of food borne diseases can vary depending on the type of infection and the severity of the illness. The most common

symptoms of food poisoning include nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal pain, and fever. These symptoms can occur within hours or days of consuming contaminated food or water. In severe cases, food borne illnesses can cause dehydration, organ failure, and even death.

Prevention of food borne diseases

Preventing food borne diseases is essential to maintaining good health. There are several ways to prevent food poisoning. These include:

Proper hygiene: Proper hygiene is essential in preventing food borne diseases. Hands should be washed with soap and water before and after handling food. Surfaces and utensils should also be cleaned and disinfected.

Proper food handling and storage: Proper food handling and storage can prevent the growth of bacteria and other pathogens. Food should be cooked to the appropriate temperature to kill bacteria. Foods should be stored at the correct temperature to prevent the growth of bacteria.

Proper cooking and reheating: Food should be cooked to the appropriate temperature to kill bacteria. Foods should be reheated to at least 165°F to kill any bacteria that may have grown.

Avoid cross-contamination: Cross-contamination occurs when bacteria from one food item are transferred to another. This can be prevented by using separate cutting boards for meat and vegetables, and by washing hands and utensils between handling different foods.

Use safe water: Water used for cooking and drinking should be safe. If the water is not safe, it should be boiled or treated before use.

Avoid risky foods: Certain foods are more likely to cause food poisoning than others. These include raw or undercooked meat, poultry, fish, and eggs, as well as unpasteurized dairy products and raw sprouts.

CONCLUSION

Food borne diseases are a serious public health concern. They

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can cause significant morbidity and mortality, especially in vulnerable populations. However, food borne illnesses can be prevented through proper hygiene, food handling, and cooking practices. It is important for individuals to be aware of the risks and symptoms of food poisoning and to take necessary precautions

to prevent infection. Additionally, food producers and processors have a responsibility to ensure that their products are safe for consumption. By working together, we can reduce the incidence of food borne diseases and protect public health.