

What about spread to others?

While people are excreting the bacteria, particularly when they have the diarrhoea, they can spread the disease to others. There should be strict attention paid to hygiene at this time.

Anyone looking after an infected child should pay special attention to their own hygiene, particularly hand washing.

What about staying away from work or school?

Everyone with this infection should stay away from work/school/day care while they are unwell. Most people can return after they have been completely free of symptoms for 48 hours, but they should stay away again if any of the symptoms redevelop.

Do you require further information?

For further information contact:

- Your local doctor or practice nurse
- Communicable Diseases at Community and Public Health

Other resources available on gastrointestinal illnesses:

- Rotavirus
- Campylobacter
- Giardia
- Cryptosporidium
- Salmonella
- Norovirus
- E. coli O157 (VTEC)

COMMUNITY AND PUBLIC HEALTH

Christchurch Office
310 Manchester Street
P.O Box 1475
Christchurch
Phone: 03 364 7844
Facsimile: 03 379 6125
Email: chic@cdhb.health.nz

West Coast Office
3 Tarapuhi Street
P.O Box 443
Greymouth
Phone: 03 768 1160
Facsimile: 03 768 1169
Email: westcoast.chic@cdhb.health.nz

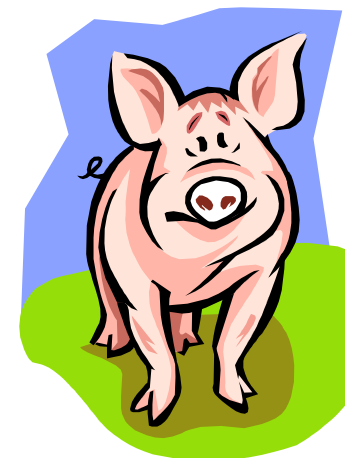
Ashburton Office
Elizabeth Street
P.O Box 110
Ashburton
Phone: 03 307 6902
Facsimile: 03 307 8081
Email: ashburton.chic@cdhb.health.nz

Timaru Office
18 Woollcombe Street
P.O Box 510
Timaru
Phone: 03 687 2600
Facsimile: 03 688 6091
Email: timaru.chic@cdhb.health.nz

www.cph.co.nz

Communicable Diseases
Community and Public Health
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Yersinia



Canterbury

District Health Board

Te Poari Hauora o Waitaha

What is Yersinia?

Yersiniosis is a bowel infection (gastroenteritis) caused by a bacteria called *Yersinia* that is found in the faeces of some wild and domestic animals, and can contaminate certain foods.

What are the symptoms?

Symptoms consist of the following:

- Diarrhoea
- Abdominal pain
- Fever
- Nausea
- Vomiting

Symptoms begin within 10 days (usually 1-3 days) after ingesting the bacteria.

The bacteria is passed out when a person has diarrhoea, sometimes for weeks or months afterwards.

Occasionally, a person may carry the bacteria in their bowel but have no symptoms.

How long does it last?

Most people recover within 2-3 weeks. In cases where loss of appetite and dehydration are severe, the disease can be potentially fatal, especially among the very young, the very old and the immune compromised.

Potential complications include a type of arthritis, blood poisoning, or an unnecessary operation to remove an appendix.

Where does it come from?

Common sources of infection are:

- By eating contaminated food especially pork and pork products
- Person-to-person by infected persons not thoroughly washing hands after using the toilet
- Drinking water or milk contaminated by faeces or urine from an infected animal
- Pet cats and dogs, especially those with diarrhoea
- An infected person who handles food
- Farm or wild animals especially pigs

How is it treated?

No specific treatment is needed except for fluid replacement and rest.

How can it be avoided?

Thoroughly wash your hands:

- Before handling food
- Before eating
- After handling raw meat
- After touching animals or animal faeces
- After going to the toilet
- After changing nappies

Other precautions include:

- Thoroughly cook all foodstuffs from animal sources, especially pork
- Thoroughly clean knives, cutting boards and other surfaces immediately after contact with raw meat
- Only use pasteurised milk and milk products
- Buried disposal of dog and cat faeces

