

Yersinia

What is Yersinia?

Yersinia is a bacterium that can make people and animals sick affecting the stomach and intestines. It is not usually serious in healthy adults but can cause severe illness in young children.

What are the symptoms of Yersinia?

Symptoms begin 4 to 7 days after ingesting the bacteria and can cause illness for 1 to 3 weeks or longer. Symptoms vary depending on the age of the individual and can be worse in children. Symptoms include:

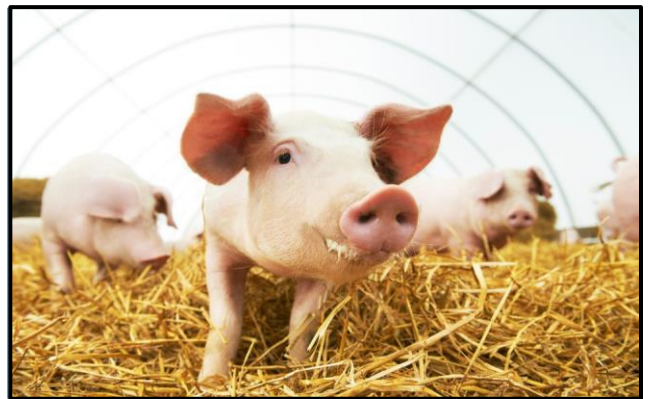
- Fever
- Abdominal pain
- Diarrhea (sometimes bloody)



How do I get Yersinia?

People must swallow or eat the bacteria to become infected. *Yersinia* is usually spread through the following:

- Eating contaminated food, especially raw or undercooked pork products, and unpasteurized milk or untreated water. Chitterlings (raw pork intestines) are a common source of illness.
- Raw meats and their juices can spread the bacteria if they touch ready-to-eat foods (salads, breads, cheeses, etc.), food surfaces and utensils (cutting boards, plates, knives, etc.) or hands.
- People who become sick with *Yersinia* will have the bacteria in their feces (poop). If people do not properly wash their hands after using the restroom or changing diapers and then handle food others will eat, or objects people will put in their mouths (like toys), they can spread the bacteria to others.
- Animals, mainly pigs, can also be infected and can spread the bacteria to people through their poop.



- *Yersinia* is **not** spread from one person to another by coughing or sneezing, sharing drinks, hugging, or kissing.

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How do you prevent *Yersinia*?

- Cook meat (especially pork) until well done. Pork is well done when it reaches 145° F.
- Use separate cutting boards and knives for meat and other foods. Wash and sanitize all cutting boards, countertops, and utensils after preparing raw meat.
- Wash your hands with soap and water at the following times:
 - After handling raw meat
 - After touching or cleaning up after animals
 - After going to the bathroom
 - After changing diapers
 - Before eating
- Do not drink unpasteurized milk.



What is the treatment for *Yersinia*?

Most cases recover on their own without treatment. If symptoms persist or are severe, see your health care provider.



Why does the health department investigate *Yersinia*?

- To track how many people are getting the disease and see who is most affected.
- To identify the source of illness and help prevent others from getting sick.
- To advise people whose jobs involve handling food, childcare, and healthcare on when it is safe for them to resume their normal job duties. The health department also helps decide when it is safe for children to return to childcare.