What causes food poisoning?

Gastroenteritis or food poisoning is a frequent cause of diarrhoea in the community. The causes for food poisoning can be bacterial or viral agents. Viral gastroenteritis is estimated to be responsible for 25 per cent to 40 per cent of hospital admissions for the illness.

**CAUSES**

- Ingestion of food or water contaminated by bacteria or viruses
- Improperly cooked food
- Mishandled food
- Food left unrefrigerated for a long period before consumption, where temperatures stimulate bacteria to grow and multiply

**SYMPTOMS**

- **Life**
  - Nausea
  - Vomiting
  - Diarrhoea
  - Fever

**CAUSATION**

- **Food poisoning**
  - Bacteria or viruses
  - Water contaminated by ingestion of food or water

**PREVENTION**

- Adherence to good food habits, with particular attention paid to:
  - Proper heating and proper refrigeration after cooking of food items

**BACTERIAL**

- **Listeria monocytogenes**
  - Causes listeriosis, a type of food poisoning caused by the bacterium Listeria in food or contaminated food
  - People get listeriosis most commonly through contaminated food sources

**VIRAL**

- Gastroenteritis or food poisoning is a frequent cause of diarrhoea in the community.
  - Viruses can cause food-poisoning incidents too. Here are two of the common culprits:
  - Norovirus
  - Rotavirus

**TREATMENT**

- In severe cases, hospitalisation may be needed.

**WHERE IT IS FOUND**

- In schools and other public places, especially catering establishment
- In homes

**PREVENTION**

- Prompt refrigeration (proper heating and handling techniques, adherence to good food habits)
- Proper heating of food

**BACTERIAL**

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**VIRUS**

- Norovirus
  - Norovirus Rotavirus
  - These viruses can also be found in raw vegetables, and cause diarrhoea with the common symptoms of vomiting and diarrhea.

**WHERE IT IS FOUND**

- In undercooked ground beef
- In raw vegetables
- In raw milk and cheese

**PREVENTION**

- Proper heating of food
- Prompt refrigeration

**WHAT TO EAT**

- Dry crackers, biscuits, toast and jam – food to be avoided during food poisoning
- Water, electrolyte drinks

**IMPORTANT POINTS**

- Eating water is more important to maintain hydration and electrolytes
- Avoid fried, oily and spicy foods

**WHY:**

- Avoid fried, oily and spicy foods
- Drinking water is more important to maintain hydration and electrolytes

**WHAT TO DRINK**

- Fluids
- Electrolyte drinks

**IMPORTANT POINTS**

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**WHAT TO AVOID**

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