

What kind of infection is it?

Yersinia is a bacterial infection.

How do people get infected?

- *Yersinia* lives in the intestines of many types of animals, including pigs.
- Most *Yersinia* infections come from contaminated food. Raw and undercooked pork are often involved. Infection can result from preparing chitterlings (hog intestines). Other foods and milk can become contaminated and cause infection.

What are the usual symptoms?

- Illness usually starts 4-6 days after exposure.
- Diarrhea, vomiting, fever, occasionally stomach pain or cramps.
- Diarrhea can have mucous or blood.

How long does it last?

- Typically 4-5 days without treatment but can be prolonged.

How is it treated?

- Prevent dehydration by drinking fluids. Most people will recover without treatment. Warning signs of dehydration include dry mouth, decreased urination, or dizziness.
- Most people will get better without antibiotics and it is not clear whether antibiotics help with diarrhea.
- For more severe illness or when infection outside of the intestines is suspected, your doctor may prescribe an antibiotic.

Are there possible complications?

- Dehydration due to loss of fluids can occur.
- *Yersinia* can cause symptoms that resemble appendicitis. Severe abdominal complications requiring surgery can happen but are rare.
- Rarely, *Yersinia* can cause infection of the bloodstream, lung, liver, or bone.
- After recovering from *Yersinia*, some patients develop pain and swelling of the joints ("reactive arthritis").

Comments:

- Wash hands carefully after using the bathroom, changing diapers and before and after cooking.
- To prevent *Yersinia*, avoid raw or undercooked pork. Do not let other food contact raw or undercooked pork.
- Wash hands immediately after handling uncooked meat.

Resources:

- [CDC Handout](#)