



**Alaska Division of Public Health**

*Prevention Promotion Protection*

## **Yersiniosis Information**

### **What is yersiniosis?**

Yersiniosis is an infectious disease caused by the bacteria *Yersinia*. In the United States, most human illness is caused by one species, *Y. enterocolitica*.

### **What are the symptoms?**

Symptoms include diarrhea (sometimes bloody), vomiting, and abdominal pain. In a small proportion of cases, complications such as skin rash, joint pains, or spread of bacteria to the bloodstream can occur.

### **How soon do symptoms appear?**

Symptoms typically develop 4 to 7 days after exposure and may last 1 to 3 weeks or longer.

### **How do you get it?**

Infection is most often acquired by eating contaminated food, especially raw or undercooked pork products. Drinking contaminated unpasteurized milk or untreated water can also transmit the infection. Occasionally infection occurs after contact with infected animals. Transmission can occur via the fecal-oral route and through contaminated food and water.

### **How do you find out if you have it?**

*Y. enterocolitica* infections are generally diagnosed by detecting the organism in the stool. The organism can also be found in other sites, including the throat, lymph nodes, joint fluid, urine, bile, and blood

### **How is it treated?**

Cases of diarrhea due to *Y. enterocolitica* usually resolve on their own without antibiotic treatment. However, in more severe or complicated infections, antibiotics may be useful.

### **How can you keep from getting it?**

Preventive measures include cooking food thoroughly, avoiding cross-contamination with raw food of animal origin, and washing hands after handling food.

### **How can you keep from spreading it?**

Wash hands with soap and water before eating and preparing food, after contact with animals, and after handling raw meat.

**Section of Epidemiology**

**3601 C Street, Suite 540**

**Anchorage, AK 99503**

**(p) 907-269-8000**

**(f) 907-562-7802**

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