Food contaminated with harmful bacteria, viruses or parasites can result in foodborne illness or “food poisoning.” Know the symptoms so you can do your part to stop foodborne illness!

Facts about foodborne illness:
- Foodborne illness affects 1 in 6 Americans annually resulting in 128,000 hospitalizations and 3,000 deaths
- It can cause serious complications and long-term health consequences:
  - Premature delivery or stillbirth
  - Reactive arthritis
  - Neurological disorders
  - Kidney failure
  - Hemolytic Uremic Syndrome (HUS)

What can cause foodborne illness?
- Raw or undercooked meat and poultry products, fresh produce, shellfish from contaminated waters
- Contaminated water
- Unpasteurized juice and milk
- Improperly home canned foods
- Time and temperature abused foods
- Leftovers that have been improperly stored/reheated
- Cross-contamination
- Food contaminated by an ill food handler (hand washing!)

Most common symptoms:
- Gastroenteritis. Symptoms can begin within hours or may take days.
  - Watery diarrhea that may be bloody
  - Severe abdominal pain or cramping
  - Nausea and/or vomiting
  - Fever or flu-like symptoms
  - Blurred or double vision

Other symptoms and conditions:
- Trouble swallowing or breathing
- Skin lesions or rose spots
- Reverse hot/cold reactions
- Signs of sepsis, such as chills, delirium, irregular heart beat and/or fast breathing
- Jaundice or arthritis
- Renal/hematologic manifestations
- Descending paralysis
- Weight loss (long term result of illness)

If you think you may have a foodborne illness:
- Go to a physician as soon as possible
- Contact your local health department
- Be specific when describing all symptoms
- Request a clinical sample (blood, urine, stool) be taken and tested for foodborne pathogens
- Be prepared to list what you have eaten for the last 72 hours

What can physicians do?
Report potential foodborne illness cases to public health partners quickly: dph.georgia.gov/public-health-districts

Food Recalls
Foodborne illness outbreaks can result in food recalls, which help protect the food supply. If you believe you have a recalled food, DON’T EAT IT!

Find information at:
- www.recalls.gov
- www.fda.gov/safety/recalls
- www.fsis.usda.gov
- Review recall notifications to confirm the specific product(s) and what to do with the product (return, discard, etc.).
- If necessary, contact the store it was purchased from or the company for more information.

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