

Clostridium perfringens

What you can do to reduce the risk of becoming ill from Clostridium perfringens

What is Clostridium perfringens?

Clostridium perfringens is a bacteria widespread in animals and the environment. These bacteria can develop spores which can survive cooking and grow during slow cooling and unrefrigerated storage. These spores can make you ill.

Outbreaks of C. perfringens food poisoning tend to happen in settings where large groups of people and/or food are being served and where keeping food at safe temperatures may be difficult. This also applies to batch cooking at home where you may leave food out to cool longer than you intended while preparing other food.

People who are most likely to suffer severe symptoms are young children, pregnant women, people with an underlying health condition (e.g. cancer, diabetes, liver and kidney disease) and older people.

For more information on the symptoms of C. perfringens and how it makes you ill, please see:

- [NHS page on food poisoning](#)
- [NIDirect page on food poisoning](#)
- [NHS 111 Wales page on food poisoning](#)
- [GOV.UK guidance on Clostridium perfringens](#)

How you can reduce the risk of C. perfringens at home

To reduce the risk of C. perfringens, it's important to:

- [cook food correctly](#) by following the instructions on time and temperature
- if you are keeping leftovers, cool them within 2 hours and place them in the fridge or freezer - you can cool food more quickly by separating it into smaller portions
- make sure food isn't left out for more than 4 hours (less on a very warm day) and keep it out of direct sunlight
- [chill your food](#) below 5°C - storing foods at this temperature will stop or significantly slow the growth of bacteria
- use food and drink by [the use-by date](#) on the label, even if it looks and smells fine – eating food after this date could put your health at risk as you can't smell or taste bacteria which could make you ill
- [avoid cross-contamination](#) which might lead to bacteria passing from raw foods to foods that are ready to eat via things like reusable shopping bags, knives, dirty surfaces and chopping boards
- make sure that [food preparation areas are clean](#) to prevent harmful bacteria from spreading
- [wash your hands](#) regularly with soap and water before, during and after meal preparation