

Food Poisoning

Story By: Andrew Frinkle

Danny was very sick. He had food poisoning. Yesterday, he ate at a restaurant with his family. Late that night, he became very ill. He was throwing up and could not keep anything down. He was miserably, horribly miserable.



He spent the day feeling weak. He couldn't even drink much water, but he was so thirsty. He could hardly eat. He just wanted to sleep and wait until this was over. The second day, he ate some crackers and some bananas – mild foods. He drank more water to stay hydrated. He was on the mend. By the third day, his energy was returning and he was able to eat most things. It took five days to feel 100% again. Still, this illness had him feeling curious about food poisoning. What caused it?

Danny learned that there were several reasons or possible causes for food poisoning. The most common cause was from bacteria in the food. Even viruses could live on or in the food. If the food had been cooked properly, it would kill anything bad living in the food. With meats, eggs, or seafood, this was most common. It could happen when someone had dirty hands and touched cooked food, too, contaminating otherwise clean food.

Another way to get food poisoning was from parasites. These often lived in meat, but could live on vegetables, too. If food was not cooked correctly, these organisms could start living in your body! That was pretty gross to imagine all the worms or creatures that might start living in your intestines!

Yet another way that you could get food poisoning was if the food had molds or toxins in them. Sometimes, these occurred naturally, and the food got something bad in it from the air, the water, or the soil where the food was gathered. Other times it was from chemical sprays that had accidentally gotten on the food or had not been washed off properly.

The last real way that people got food poisoning was from allergens. Some people were just allergic to foods, and they could cause all sorts of discomfort and distress. Sometimes there were ingredients that allergic people knew to avoid, but they were hidden in sauces or in a food, and they didn't even know until too late!

Danny realized just how important it was to select good foods, to cook them and prepare them properly. He *never* wanted to feel this way again. It was worth the extra time to do things right, and they tasted better!

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Use the information in the story to answer the questions below.

1. What caused Danny to get sick?
 - A. bad food
 - B. someone coughed on him
 - C. playing in the cold rain
 - D. not washing his hands
2. Which of these is NOT one of the causes of food poisoning that Danny learned about?
 - A. bacteria
 - B. viruses
 - C. bad air
 - D. parasites
3. What is the most common cause of food poisoning?
 - A. bacteria
 - B. viruses
 - C. allergens
 - D. parasites
4. TRUE OR FALSE: Danny realizes how important it is to eat out in nice restaurants.
 - A. True
 - B. False
5. On what day did Danny finally feel 100% again?
 - A. 2
 - B. 3
 - C. 4
 - D. 5

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