

Food poisoning - germs, risk factors, symptoms, complications, and treatment

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The paper " Food Poisoning - Germs, Risk Factors, Symptoms, Complications, and Treatment" is a thrilling example of a term paper on health sciences & medicine. Food poisoning has several germs that cause it, risk factors that predispose individuals to it and can lead to serious complications. There are a number of ways of treating and managing food poisoning.

Germs that cause food poisoning

Campylobacter enteritis infects the small intestines and it commonly affects most people who travel internationally. Infection by this germ manifests in diarrhea but it can disappear without much intervention unless it persists in which case antibiotics suffices. Salmonella bacteria cause a type of food poisoning called Salmonella enterocolitis. Its infection is detected on the wall of the small intestine especially in patients below the age of twenty. E. coli resides in the small intestines but when ingestion of E. coli O157: H7 can induce serious food poisoning. Staphylococcus aureus induces food poisoning by releasing toxins and it is not easily killed by heating. The signs and symptoms of shigella manifest between one and seven days of ingestion through diarrhea, abdominal pain, and fever (Landau, 2010).

Risk factors for food poisoning

The weak immune system is one of the risk factors. At infancy, the immune system is not fully developed and it cannot fight off some of the common diseases causing organisms including those that cause food poisoning. Food poisoning affects elderly people because their immune system dwindles and fails with time. This makes it slow in fighting off disease-causing organisms. Pregnancy alters a woman's metabolism and circulation impairing the body's readiness to detect and respond to pathogens. This state of the weakened

immune system can cause the mother to pass food poisoning to the fetus but rarely. The body expends a lot of its defenses in trying to cope with serious conditions such as AIDS and diabetes and thereby becoming susceptible to food poisoning germs and bacteria. Traveling across the borders of the place individuals are used to can predispose them to food poisoning germs and bacteria for which their bodies are not prepared. Treatments such as chemotherapy and radiation can be too strong for the body's immune system and can end up weakening its defenses (Landau, 2010). Symptoms

The action of food poisoning germs on their target organs causes abdominal cramps with agonizing pain but this depends on the severity of the condition. Diarrhea is another sign of food poisoning that results from problems of indigestion. Certain food poisoning germs can cause blood to flow rapidly into the patient's head causing headache. Nausea and vomiting occur during food poisoning because the patient's alimentary canal repels any content within the stomach. Fever and chills manifest in patients of food poisoning because of stomach upset and altered body metabolism. Blood and pus traces in the stool of a food poisoning patient results from the ulcers that can result from the eating away of the stomach wall by germs. Thirst, dizziness, and light-headedness result when the body of a person suffering from food poisoning runs short of the important water element in the blood because of vomiting and diarrhea (Landau, 2010).

Complications

In severe cases, food poisoning can escalate into kidney problems. Food poisoning can escalate into damage to the nervous system and arthritis.

Food poisoning during early pregnancy can lead to stillbirth or miscarriage. Children who live through food poisoning may sustain injuries to the neural system and can exhibit retarded growth. After food poisoning, some people develop lactose intolerance that compromises their ability to digest lactose and this can cause the patient to experience bloating and watery stool after the intake of milk. Food poisoning can also reduce the effectiveness of the medications that a patient might have been taking treating another condition. This is primarily because of diarrhea or vomiting that eliminates the medications before they work. Another complication that can result after food poisoning is hemolytic uremic syndrome. This syndrome is associated with E. coli and it causes anemia, reduction of platelet count in the patient's blood or kidney failure (Landau, 2010).

Treatment and management

Rest is one of the home-based treatment options that can help patients recuperate from the fatigue that comes from fever and vomiting. Whereas food poisoning can lead to loss of appetite, there is a need for the patient to eat plain foods especially after the symptoms cool down. Even so, dry foods are to be avoided because they can worsen the symptoms of food poisoning. There are oral re-hydration therapies that can help treat food poisoning but patients should consult for any possible kidney disorder. Severe food poisoning can require physicians to refer patients for lumbar puncture or MRI/CT scan in order to assess the extent of the injury and prescribe the right antibiotics. Serious complications in a food poisoning patient can warrant admittance to the hospital in order for the patient to receive specialized attention from physicians. Washing hands after visiting the toilet

and before coming into contact with food can help in managing food poisoning. Patients of food poisoning are advised not to prepare food for the period of their symptoms lest they contaminate the food and spread the germ to others (Landau, 2010).

In conclusion, whereas they are not necessary, antidiarrheal medicines can help reduce diarrhea but it is not recommended for children below twelve years and for patients of food poisoning who have a fever, or traces of mucus and blood in their diarrhea.