

[Staphylococcus aureus](#)

[Staphylococcal \(Staph\) Food Poisoning](#)

Sources	People who carry the bacteria <i>Staphylococcus aureus</i> (Staph), which is commonly found on the skin, can contaminate food if they don't wash their hands before touching it. Foods that are not cooked after handling, such as sliced meats, puddings, pastries, and sandwiches, are especially risky if contaminated with Staph.
Incubation period	30 minutes to 8 hours
Symptoms	Sudden start of nausea, vomiting, and stomach cramps. Most people also have diarrhea.
Duration of illness	1 day
What to do	Drink plenty of fluids. If you cannot drink enough fluids to prevent dehydration, call your doctor. Your doctor may give you medicine to decrease nausea and vomiting.
Prevention	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use a food thermometer and cook foods to their safe minimum internal temperature.• Keep hot foods hot (140°F (60°C) or hotter) and cold foods cold (40°F (4°C) or colder).• Store cooked food in shallow containers and refrigerate within 2 hours (or 1 hour if it's hotter than 90°F (32°C) outside).• Wash your hands for 20 seconds with soap and water before, during, and after preparing food, and before eating.• Do not prepare food if you are ill with diarrhea or vomiting.• Wear gloves while preparing food if you have wounds or infections on your hands or wrists.

Date Last Reviewed August 14, 2025