

Yersinia enterocolitica

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The Organism: *Yersinia* species are commonly found in a wide variety of animals, birds and environmental sources. Pigs are the most important animal source.

Sources of the organism:

Intestinal tracts of infected animals, poultry, and humans
Contaminated water

Associated foods:

Seafood
Meat (pork, beef, lamb, etc.)
Poultry
Unpasteurized milk
Water

Microorganism Characteristics: Gram negative rod shaped bacteria

Growth conditions:

Temperature range: 0-113°C (32-113°F)
Optimum Temperature: 37°C (98.6°F)
pH range: Tolerant of alkaline environments

The Disease: Yersiniosis is a gastroenteritis which mimics appendicitis. The disease is rare in the United States but more common in Europe.

Symptoms include:

Sharp pain in lower right quadrant of abdomen
(appendicitis-like symptom)
Diarrhea
Vomiting
Complications may include reactive arthritis

Onset time:

24-48 hours

Infective Dose:

Unknown

Duration of symptoms:

1-3 weeks

Control:

- Thoroughly cook meat, poultry and seafood.
- Use pasteurized milk.
- Proper sanitation of food contact surfaces and utensils.
- Use proper hand washing techniques and personal hygiene practices.
- Because *Yersinia* can grow at refrigeration temperatures, extended shelf life refrigerated foods need to be handled and stored properly.