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Nov 27, 2012 6:24pm

# Study Finds Most Pork Contaminated With Yersinia Bacteria

([http://abcnews.go.com/author/alyssa\\_newcomb](http://abcnews.go.com/author/alyssa_newcomb))

By [Alyssa Newcomb](#)

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(Image Credit: Getty)

Images)

A sample of raw pork products from supermarkets around the United States found that yersinia enterocolitica, a lesser-known food-borne pathogen, was present in 60 percent of the products.



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food-borne pathogen, was present in 69 percent of the products tested, according to a study released today by Consumer Reports.

The bacteria infects more than 100,000 Americans a year, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, but for every case that is confirmed with a laboratory test, about 120 more cases escape diagnosis. Symptoms can include fever, cramps and bloody diarrhea.

For its sample, Consumer Reports included the same pork products millions of Americans buy every day at their supermarkets. The study included 148 pork chops and 50 ground pork samples from around the United States.

In the samples tested, 69 percent tested positive for yersinia and 11 percent for enterococcus, which can indicate fecal contamination that can lead to urinary-tract infections. Salmonella and listeria, the more well-known bacterium, registered at 4 percent and 3 percent, respectively.

“The results were concerning,” Urvashi Rangan, one of the authors of the report, told ABCNews.com. “It’s hard to say that there was no problem. It shows that there needs to be better hygiene at animal plants. Yersinia wasn’t even being monitored for.”

In a written statement, the Pork Producer’s Council questioned the methods used by Consumer Reports, saying the number of samples tested, 198, did “not provide a nationally informative estimate of the true prevalence of the cited bacteria on meat.”

Despite the findings, Rangan said it’s good to know that the bacteria can be killed by cooking the pork properly and by being vigilant about cross-contamination.

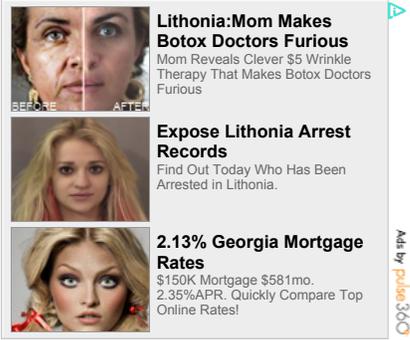
Pork cuts should be cooked to 145 degrees, while ground pork needs to reach a temperature of 160 degrees to kill the bacteria.

“Anything that touches raw meat should go into the dishwasher before touching anything else,” Rangan said. “Juices from raw meat that touch the counter should be washed with hot soapy water.”

The U.S. Department of Agriculture said the findings “affirm that companies are meeting the established guidelines for protecting the public’s health.

“USDA will remain vigilant against emerging and evolving threats to the safety of America’s supply of meat, poultry and processed egg products, and we will continue to work with the industry to ensure companies are following food safety procedures in addition to looking for new ways to strengthen the protection of public health,” the department said in a statement.

*ABC News’ Dr. Anita Chu contributed reporting.*



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## USER COMMENTS

Sounds like we need more corporate deregulation.

POSTED BY: DJ | NOVEMBER 27, 2012 NOVEMBER 27, 2012, 9:20 PM

no doubt this is an attempt to steer folks away from pork products .... won't be long before pork is outlawed in this country..it's so dangerous.....they already have taken it out of our prison system to accomodate Muslims.

POSTED BY: STELLA | NOVEMBER 27, 2012 NOVEMBER 27, 2012, 9:32 PM

from the TV article, "always use the same cutting board for raw pork and vegetables" ?? showing a picture of raw pork chunks and zucchini chunks....

Care to recommend a mortician to go along with that advice?

POSTED BY: LARRY NEER | NOVEMBER 27, 2012 NOVEMBER 27, 2012, 9:56 PM

All raw meat in the stores has some bacteria on it. Is this yersinia bacteria an unusual problem? Those complaining about don't come out and say so: "The results were concerning," Urvashi Rangan, one of the authors of the report, told ABCNews.com. "It's hard to say that there was no problem." +++++ Gee, Urvashi, then why is it had to say there is a problem? As a physical scientist, I don't know what to make of this information, although one thing is sure: the 100,000 diagnosed infected people and the other estimated 12,000,000 cases are due to poor food handling: not hitting 145F for pork pieces and 160F for ground pork or cross-contamination from using the same containers, implements etc for pork and unheated veggies.

POSTED BY: THE\_MICK | NOVEMBER 27, 2012 NOVEMBER 27, 2012, 10:27 PM

He hath only forbidden you dead meat, and blood, and the flesh of swine 2:173 Quran

POSTED BY: OMAR | NOVEMBER 27, 2012 NOVEMBER 27, 2012, 10:27 PM

Yes, your mother was right.....Washing your hands often and FULLY cooking your meat can indeed save your life and keep you from getting sick. No the bacteria aren't a problem generally—as long as you fully cook your meat and don't cross contaminate.

POSTED BY: RODENTHAIR | NOVEMBER 27, 2012 NOVEMBER 27, 2012, 10:55 PM

Wow. This is why you cook meat – to kill the germs. Otherwise, we could eat it all raw, and wouldn't even need to clean the blood off the cutting boards. Big surprise.

POSTED BY: HILLBILLETER | NOVEMBER 28, 2012 NOVEMBER 28, 2012, 12:53 AM

When did you NOT have to thoroughly cook pork?

POSTED BY: AMERICATHEPITIFUL | NOVEMBER 28, 2012 NOVEMBER 28, 2012, 1:06 AM

I'm pretty sure that's why we have a thing called 'fire'.

POSTED BY: FLOYD | NOVEMBER 28, 2012 NOVEMBER 28, 2012, 2:16 AM

All meat, and a lot of vegetables, fruit too are contaminated. That's because big corporation now holds the monopoly on farming in America. Corporations whose sights are on profits rather than safety.

POSTED BY: HERE\_WHY | NOVEMBER 28, 2012 NOVEMBER 28, 2012, 2:48 AM

The US Government does not care about American consumers. How many people must get sick or die before someone in Washington sees the light?

POSTED BY: LEAVEUSFLEE | NOVEMBER 28, 2012 NOVEMBER 28, 2012, 4:33 AM

Bacteria? Really? That is the problem? It seems to me with age-old safe food handling and cooking practices, bacteria should never be a problem. What about the antibiotics and hormones? How do we keep those from getting into our system? How do we keep the insane over-use of antibiotics from creating super bugs (actually, too late now)? What about the incredible pollution caused by the factory farms producing this toxic meat? And what about the unbelievably inhumane ways the animals are treated; a true "Matrix" where the animals are the energy source and humans are their en-slavers? And what about the "government recommended food pyramid" that recommends we eat so much more meat (and dairy) than ALL studies not backed by the dairy and cattle associations recommend? Bacteria? Get real.

POSTED BY: JOHN | NOVEMBER 28, 2012 NOVEMBER 28, 2012, 5:32 AM

One more story to support the muslims. We have known you have to cook Pork well done since the beginning of time. How is this a top story. I would rather hear about how our country is going down the toilet and how all these stupid people voted the same idiots in again.

POSTED BY: JANET | NOVEMBER 28, 2012 NOVEMBER 28, 2012, 6:36 AM

In their ever-increasing need to eat raw everything, many famous TV chefs, and many top restaurant chefs, have pushed the idea of a medium-rare pork chop to an unsuspecting public. Yet they throw a major hissy-fit if served semi-cooked chicken. Watch an episode or two of 'Chopped' some time on Food Network to hear the judges comments about "overdone" pork or "undercooked" chicken. Pork is NO DIFFERENT than chicken when it comes to contamination with bacteria. ALWAYS fully cook any pork product.

POSTED BY: BOB | NOVEMBER 28, 2012 NOVEMBER 28, 2012, 6:40 AM

JANET: "One more story to support the muslims." – Wow! How paranoid is that? Maybe, it's a story to support Jews or Seventh-day Adventists as they also don't eat pork. Or Rastafarians who won't even say the word 'pork', they call it 'dat'. Or maybe, just maybe, the story isn't about Muslims, or any other religious group, or supporting Obama's secret plan to do America down? Maybe it's just about possibly contaminated meat?

POSTED BY: ZHUNDRETHOUSAND | NOVEMBER 28, 2012 NOVEMBER 28, 2012, 7:00 AM

I gotsa have me my poke-chops.

POSTED BY: HKDAKOTA | NOVEMBER 28, 2012 NOVEMBER 28, 2012, 7:10 AM

has common sense died in this country??

POSTED BY: HKDAKOTA | NOVEMBER 28, 2012 NOVEMBER 28, 2012, 7:11 AM

Uhh... that's a little disturbing. Yersinia is the Black Plague Bacteria. Y.Pestis it's known as... hmm... nice to know what I'm grilling with my ribs...

POSTED BY: MALFEAN | NOVEMBER 28, 2012 NOVEMBER 28, 2012, 7:15 AM

Vegetarian.

POSTED BY: DJ | NOVEMBER 28, 2012 NOVEMBER 28, 2012, 8:15 AM

vegetarians are boring.

POSTED BY: ZENMASTER6 | NOVEMBER 28, 2012 NOVEMBER 28, 2012, 8:29 AM

OMAR: maybe you should worry about lead poisoning instead, if you catch my meaning.

POSTED BY: ZENMASTER6 | NOVEMBER 28, 2012 NOVEMBER 28, 2012, 8:31 AM

This is why it is important to buy your meats (chicken, pork, beef etc) from a local farmer who runs an organic, antibiotic and hormone free and most importantly a HUMANE farm. When the animals are treated with respect and kept in a clean environment, then you don't get nasty germs and contaminants in the meat. I urge all of you to check out your local farmers market or if you don't have one of those available look on the internet for someone who ships. Personally I can recommend jdbeef.com They are from Georgia and I buy from them ever single week at my local farmers market, but they ship as well. Their farm is beautiful, the animals are well kept and happy.

POSTED BY: AMY | NOVEMBER 28, 2012 NOVEMBER 28, 2012, 8:32 AM

i assume all meat, even those from local organic producers, have bacteria of some sort. cook properly and everything is fine.

POSTED BY: JIM | NOVEMBER 28, 2012 NOVEMBER 28, 2012, 8:51 AM

The question I have for Consumer Reports is how this any different from pork a decade or two ago? Oh, it's not? Y. Pestis has always been in swine? Then HOW IS THIS NEWS?! WARNING PORK SUSHI MIGHT MAKE YOU SICK! To be fair, I'm a bit surprised ABC News didn't go with the even more inflammatory and alarmist angle: BLACK DEATH BACTERIA IN PORK!

POSTED BY: KERRY MAXWELL | NOVEMBER 28, 2012 NOVEMBER 28, 2012, 9:23 AM

Compare the way pigs are raised and slaughtered today with 50 years ago. If you saw the way on of those giant corporate pig 'factories' raise and slaughter them, you wouldn't eat pork again. They keep them in such crowded conditions they have to give them preventative antibiotics, they feed them real garbage. And the slaughter houses are beyond gross. Buying meat locally or doing without is the only way to eat healthy to avoid corporate designed garbage meat like modern pork.

POSTED BY: LIBRARIAN53 | NOVEMBER 28, 2012 NOVEMBER 28, 2012, 9:53 AM

Sorry all food has some contaminants, there is actually an FDA allowable level of insects and rat feces, in all foods. If you are cooking your pork this is not a problem, if you have a healthy immune system this is not a problem.

POSTED BY: SNEWSOM2997 | NOVEMBER 28, 2012 NOVEMBER 28, 2012, 10:24 AM

...and pork is my favorite. YAY for pork contamination!!!

POSTED BY: THATWASOBLIVIOUS | NOVEMBER 28, 2012 NOVEMBER 28, 2012, 10:38 AM

Everything you touch has germs and bacteria so why would an uncooked meat product be any different? Pork and chicken seem to be the main culprits for carrying certain 'harmful' bacteria but shouldn't that already be a known fact? Especially if you are checking for contaminants on an uncooked product. I love pork and use it to make tamales during the holiday season. I have never been sickened by pork or chicken for that matter. You have to remember to cook pork and chicken thoroughly and most of the time it is safe. Go, pork!

POSTED BY: ILUVDAUSA | NOVEMBER 28, 2012 NOVEMBER 28, 2012, 11:40 AM

First, this needs to be said: the bacteria mentioned in this article are NOT the bacteria believed responsible for the Black Death. That was Yersinia pestis. The article is talking about Yersinia enterocolitica – same genus, different species. They do not affect humans the same way; it's not even close. Now that that's been said, just follow the same food-handling practices that you've been told to follow for decades and you won't have to worry. And for crying out loud, stop making this (and everything else) a political issue. Seriously, folks, that's gotten really old. You don't actually think you're solving anything by doing that, do you?

POSTED BY: DAVE | NOVEMBER 28, 2012 NOVEMBER 28, 2012, 12:30 PM

So all pork is contaminated. I must warn you folks...don't start bashing bacon, you won't be able to stand the backlash!

POSTED BY: DON | NOVEMBER 28, 2012 NOVEMBER 28, 2012, 3:07 PM

Its george bush's fault.

POSTED BY: MOJORON | NOVEMBER 28, 2012 NOVEMBER 28, 2012, 7:45 PM

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