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"treating the cause of your problem, not just the symptoms"

A Senior's Diet

As you get older, it's important to pay careful attention to the safety of the food you eat. Although Canada has one of the best food safety systems in the world, there are still 11 to 13 million cases of food borne illness across the country each year. That means your ability to stay healthy depends on what food you eat, how well you *store* your food at home, and how carefully you *prepare* it before you eat.

A good, balanced diet is important to help older people stay healthy. But as we age:

- Our immune systems weaken, making it harder to fight disease and easier to get sick from germs in our food.
- Our stomachs produce less acid, leaving us with more bacteria in our intestines.
- And when older adults get sick, the effects can often be more severe or even fatal.

The risk may be even greater if you have diabetes or kidney disease, or if you're undergoing some forms of cancer treatment. When older people get sick, it also takes them longer to recover.

Canada has stringent regulations in place to make sure the food we buy is free of contamination and safe to eat. Any business that produces or sells food—from farmers and food processors to supermarkets, delis, butchers, and restaurants—must meet these standards. As the consumer, once you buy a food product, *you* are the next link in the chain that keeps your food safe and healthy

So what exactly is a food borne illness? Food borne illness is sometimes called "food poisoning." It's what happens when a person eats food contaminated with germs, including bacteria, viruses, and parasites. Depending on the type of germs and how many are in the food, symptoms of food borne illness could include any or all of:

- Stomach cramps

- Nausea and vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Headache and fever

Symptoms can begin a few hours or a few days after eating contaminated food. Food borne illness does not usually last long, but in older adults it can sometimes be severe, even deadly. While most people recover completely from food borne illness, longer-term health effects like kidney failure and anaemia are more common in older people.