

CLOSTRIDIUM PERFRINGENS LIKELY CAUSE OF ILLNESS THAT SICKENED MANY IN MYRTLE BEACH, SC.



Clostridium perfringens may be present in small amounts after cooking and can multiply to dangerous levels in improperly cooled and held food

Foods that have suffered temperature abuse often lead to *Clostridium perfringens* poisoning

South Carolina health officials have determined that bacteria commonly linked to improper cooling and reheating of food was the likely cause of an illness that sickened over 30 attendees of a political event in May at the Myrtle Beach Convention Center.

S.C. Department of Health and Environmental Control officials confirmed *Clostridium perfringens* likely caused the outbreak linked to a meal served after an event honoring U.S. Rep. Henry Brown.

Improper cooling is suspected as the cause of the outbreak. It is not known how rapidly the food that the caterer prepared was cooled.

The menu of barbecue pork, coleslaw, baked beans, rolls and dessert was reportedly prepared 15 miles away from the event and portions were reheated on site.

Many of the affected suffered from diarrhea and lower gastrointestinal issues.



“Sometimes food doesn’t get cool enough, [quick] enough. That’s when bacteria multiplies to food poisoning-type levels”

Adam Myrick, SC Department of Health and Environmental Control

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Cool food safely

- Food can be briefly left out to cool, as long as it is refrigerated by the time it reaches 120°F. Use a thermometer to verify the temperature.
- Food cools faster when uncovered, and should be cooled in a dish no more than 2 inches deep or less than 1-gallon/6-inches-in-diameter pot.
- Be careful to not cross-contaminate while cooling; food can be covered after it reaches 55 F.



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