Foodborne: staphylococcal

2007 Case Definition (North Carolina)

Clinical description

An illness characterized by acute onset of some or all of the following symptoms: nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal cramps and prostration after ingestion of food contaminated with toxins produced by Staphylococcus aureus. Symptoms develop 30 minutes to 8 hours after exposure; the usual incubation period is 2-4 hours.

Laboratory criteria for diagnosis

- Isolation of Staphylococcus aureus from clinical specimen (including stool, wound, vomitus or throat swabs)
- Isolation of Staphylococcus aureus from a leftover food sample
- Positive Staphylococcus aureus toxin assay in a leftover food sample

Case classification

Confirmed:
- a clinically compatible case with a positive culture for Staphylococcus aureus in a clinical specimen

Probable:
- a clinically compatible case epidemiologically linked to a confirmed case, or
- a clinically compatible case who provides a leftover food sample that
  o cultures positive for Staphylococcus aureus, or
  o tests positive for toxin in a toxin assay