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## NF94-161 *Yersinia enterocolitica*

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## *Yersinia enterocolitica*

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- The Disease:** *Yersinia enterocolitica* bacteria causes yersiniosis. Most commonly, people suffer various symptoms of gastro-enteritis, but more serious cases can lead to polyarthrititis, septicemia and meningitis. Fatality from gastroenteritis is rare, and recovery, if there are no further complications, occurs within one or two days.
- The Organism:** Certain strains of the bacteria produce disease, but it appears that many of the strains are nonpathogenic and do not cause disease. *Y. enterocolitica* can grow at refrigerator temperatures, but grows best at room temperature. It is sensitive to heat and is destroyed by adequate cooking and by pasteurization of milk.
- Sources:** *Y. enterocolitica* is commonly found in a wide variety of animals, food and water sources. Pigs are the most important animal source. Food sources include raw milk, meat, poultry, shellfish, vegetables, and tofu.
- Control:** Post-pasteurization contamination of milk is the most frequent cause of foodborne outbreaks. Preventive measures in processing plants should include strict adherence to good manufacturing procedures for keeping perishable products such as tofu and milk clean and cold. The use of untreated water from any source in food manufacturing should be avoided.
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