

# BRISBANE, AUSTRALIA RESTAURANT FINED OVER BACTERIA

## IMPROPER COOLING OF DISH LINKED TO OUTBREAK

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A leading Brisbane restaurant has been fined \$20,000 for selling food containing a potentially fatal bacteria, *Clostridium perfringens*.

At least three people developed serious food poisoning after eating traditional Turkish chicken and lamb guvech - **a casserole-style dish** - at the Harem Restaurant in the Brisbane suburb of Paddington in July last year. An additional 16 people at the function also reported symptoms, but were not confirmed as ill.

Analysis of stool samples revealed the customers had consumed spores of *Clostridium perfringens* bacteria. Brisbane Magistrates Court was told that the restaurant's food handlers had failed to implement safe cooling techniques for the guvech dishes, **which were cooked several hours before the function.**

*Clostridium perfringens* symptoms:

- Intense abdominal cramps
- diarrhea
- 8-22 hours after eating the food
- usually over within 24 hours, but can last 1-2 weeks



**Reportedly, the dish had been left out for about eight hours before being refrigerated.**

Investigators visited the Harem Restaurant the following day and found more of the contaminated casserole.

Small numbers of *Clostridium perfringens* are often present after cooking and multiply to dangerous levels if improperly cooled and stored.

Meats, meat products, casseroles and gravy are the foods most frequently implicated.

### Safe cooling tips:

- Food can be briefly left out to cool, as long as it is put in the refrigerator by the time it gets to 120°F (49°C)
- Food cools faster when uncovered, and should be cooled in a dish no more than 2 inches deep or less than 4-liter/6 inches-in-diameter pot
- Be careful to not cross-contaminate while cooling; cover after cooling

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