WHY IS FOOD POISONING SO MYSTERIOUS?  
the challenge of finding the culprit

**MISCONCEPTIONS:**

I’m taking antibiotics.  
**How could I be infected with bacteria?**  
Many other things besides bacteria can cause food poisoning such as viruses, parasites, mold, toxins, contaminants, & even allergens.

The last thing I ate must have caused this!  
Actually, it can take several hours or even several days to develop symptoms. The culprit could be something you don’t remember eating.

I already washed that, though!  
Contamination can happen at any stage: when your food is growing, during harvest, while washing, in transport, in your grocery store, as well as in your own home.

But my food looks perfectly fine!  
Affected foods may appear normal, but could still be dangerous. Even if food looks, smells, and tastes fine, it could still carry impurities.

I don’t remember what I ate.  
Unless you track your food, it can be difficult to determine the cause of food poisoning, especially if it was something you ate weeks ago.

I think it’s just indigestion.  
Symptoms of food poisoning (nausea, vomiting, stomach pain, diarrhea, loss of appetite, fever, headaches, & muscle aches) can be mistaken for other sicknesses and will therefore go unnoticed.

I’m fine; I don’t need to go to a doctor.  
Outbreaks can’t be detected by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention unless patients seek medical attention, and cases are reported. But bacteria that cause food poisoning may not automatically be tested for when patients do go to the doctor. Sometimes calling the local Department of Health to report an illness can help identify an outbreak.

**MISSING PIECES:**

NORO VIRUS is the #1 cause of diarrhea or vomiting outbreaks spread by direct contact with an infected person or touching a contaminated surface.

Source: CDC http://www.cdc.gov/norovirus/images/quick-stats-lg.jpg