



# Campylobacter

## **What is Campylobacter?**

Campylobacter are a group of bacteria. When ingested, these bacteria are capable of causing illness in humans and animals commonly referred to as Campylobacteriosis.

## **How is Campylobacter spread?**

You may become ill by eating undercooked chicken, beef or pork. Most raw meats and their juices are contaminated with *Campylobacter* bacteria, which are usually destroyed during cooking.

Ingestion of 'ready-to-eat' foods, such as fruit or salad ingredients that have been contaminated with the juices of raw meats during preparation may expose you to the bacteria.

Raw eggs and egg products, and raw or unpasteurized milk are another source of *Campylobacter* bacteria.

You may also be exposed to the bacteria if you are in contact with the fecal matter (poop) of an infected person, child or infant (for example, during diaper changes) and then do not wash your hands well before touching your mouth, preparing or eating food, or if you ingest water that has been contaminated with fecal matter (poop).

Puppies, kittens and farm animals are other important sources of *Campylobacter*. When you handle infected animals and ingest their waste products you may be exposed to the bacteria.

## **What symptoms should I watch for?**

Most people experience diarrhea, abdominal pain, tiredness, fever, nausea and vomiting. You may have blood or mucous in liquid stools. These symptoms usually begin 2 to 5 days after you are exposed to the bacteria. Most people are mildly sick for about one week. Some people who are infected with *Campylobacter* don't have any symptoms at all. In some people the bacteria is capable of causing more serious complications, but this is rare.

## **What is the treatment for Campylobacteriosis?**

Consulting your health care provider is recommended as he/she may suggest antibiotics or treatment focused on symptoms, such as fluid replacement to prevent dehydration.

## **How do I protect myself and others?**

- Cook all meat, especially poultry, to recommended temperatures.

Product	Celsius	Fahrenheit
Whole Chicken/Turkey	82	180
Poultry Breasts	74	165
Pork	71	160
Ground Meat	71-74	160-165

- Clean and sanitize counter tops and utensils after contact with raw meats and poultry, especially before using these areas or utensils to prepare ready-to-eat foods or foods that will not be cooked any further.
- Avoid using raw eggs in eggnogs, salad dressings, ice cream and desserts. Never use cracked or dirty eggs. Cook all egg products thoroughly; eggs cooked "over easy" or "sunny side up" are incompletely cooked.
- Drink only pasteurized milk and water from an approved or chemically treated source. If you are unsure of the safety of your water supply, bring the water to a rapid rolling boil for at least 1 minute, or use an approved disinfectant.
- It is important to wash your hands before and after using the toilet, before preparing or eating meals, after changing diapers and after being in close contact with animals. It only takes a small amount of the bacteria to make you ill.

## **Is there anything special I need to know?**

If you are infected with *Campylobacter* and you provide services to others, particularly seniors or children, you should not go to work while you are having symptoms. Your employer will determine when it is safe for you to return to work. It is possible that even after you are feeling better you will still be shedding the bacteria in your stool for a period of time. To prevent spreading the disease to people around you, always practice good hand washing and hygiene and stay home when you are ill.

For more information please call the Communicable Disease Team at ext. 8809