

FACT SHEET

Campylobacter

What is Campylobacter?

Campylobacter is an intestinal infection caused by a bacteria named *Campylobacter jejuni*. It is one of the most common causes of diarrheal illness in the world.

How is it spread?

Campylobacter is spread by eating food that is contaminated with the bacteria (these germs are often found in undercooked meat and poultry). It can also be caused by contaminating other foods with these items. For example, a person can get infected when a cutting board that has been used to cut and prepare raw chicken isn't washed before it is used to prepare other foods like salad. It can also be transmitted by drinking contaminated water and unpasteurized milk or from contact with feces of infected dogs, cats, and other animals. This organism is not readily transmitted person to person except from children in diapers.

What are the symptoms?

- Diarrhea (often bloody)
- Abdominal pain
- Fever
- Fatigue
- Nausea & vomiting

How can it be prevented?

- Practice good hygiene and always wash your hands after going to the bathroom, before eating food, after changing diapers, after blowing your nose, coughing, sneezing, after touching pets or garbage, and before preparing food.
- Thoroughly cook all poultry, meats, and eggs.
- Wash in hot soapy water all utensils or cutting boards that were used for raw meat/poultry.
- Don't drink water from unknown or unsafe sources.

How is it treated?

Most people with Campylobacter recover without specific treatment. It is important to stay well hydrated to replace fluids lost due to diarrhea. Antibiotics may shorten the duration of infection and prevent relapse if given early in the illness. Most people with Campylobacter recover completely within a week. However, an infected person may continue to shed the bacteria in their stool for several weeks after recovery which may result in person-to-person transmission.

If you are a food-handler, or work at, or attend a day care, you should be off work or not attend until you are no longer having symptoms.

This fact sheet is for informational purposes only and is not intended for self-diagnosis or as a substitute for consultation with a health care provider. For more information contact your health care provider or visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention at www.cdc.gov.

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