

# Campylobacter

## What is *Campylobacter*?

*Campylobacter* is a bacterium that can make people and animals sick. It affects the stomach and intestines and is a major source of foodborne illness worldwide.

## What are the symptoms of *Campylobacter*?

Symptoms begin 1-10 days (usually 2-5 days) after ingesting the bacteria and typically last one week. Some infected people may not have any symptoms, but are still able to spread the illness. Symptoms include:

- Diarrhea - sometimes bloody
- Fever
- Stomach pain
- Nausea - sometimes with vomiting
- Tiredness
- Dehydration from diarrhea or vomiting

## What is the treatment for *Campylobacter*?

- Most symptoms will go away on their own in 3-10 days.
- Ill people should drink extra fluids as long as the diarrhea lasts to avoid dehydration.
- If symptoms continue or are severe, contact your health care provider.

## How do I get *Campylobacter*?

People must swallow or eat the bacteria to become infected. *Campylobacter* is usually spread through the following:

- Eating raw or undercooked meats (especially poultry) and unpasteurized (raw) milk.
- Raw meats and their juices can spread the bacteria if they touch ready-to-eat foods (salads, breads, cheeses, etc.), food surfaces and utensils (cutting boards, plates, knives, etc.) or hands.



- People who become sick with *Campylobacter* will have the bacteria in their feces (poop). If people do not wash their hands after using the bathroom or changing diapers, and then touch food or objects that others put in their mouths (like toys), they can make other people sick.



- Pets, like puppies and kittens, can also be infected and can spread the illness through their poop.
- *Campylobacter* is **NOT** spread from person to person by coughing, sneezing, sharing drinks, hugging, or kissing.

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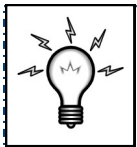
## How do I prevent *Campylobacter*?

- Cook meats until well done. Poultry is well done when it reaches 165°F and its juices run clear.
- Do not drink unpasteurized (raw) milk.



- Wash hands with soap and sanitize utensils and food surfaces (like cutting boards) after touching raw meats. Sanitize utensils using a mixture of 1 teaspoon unscented bleach to one gallon of water.

- Wash hands after handling pets (or other animals) or cleaning up after animals. Do not let pets lick you on the face.
- Always wash your hands after using the bathroom. You may have and spread the bacteria even if you do not feel sick.
- Wash your hands and the child's hands after changing diapers or helping them use the bathroom.



### **Health Tip**

Follow these steps to keep your kitchen safe:

- Wash, rinse, and sanitize cutting boards, knives, utensils, and food surfaces after preparing raw meats.
- Wash hands with soap and warm running water for at least 20 seconds after preparing raw meats.
- Keep raw meats separated from other foods.
- Store raw meats on the bottom shelf in the refrigerator so that their juices will not drip on and contaminate other food.
- Use a separate cutting board for preparing raw meats. Color-coding cutting boards may be helpful.
- Thoroughly wash all fruits and vegetables.

## If you think you have *Campylobacter*:

- Do not prepare food for others.
- If your job involves handling food, caring for small children, or if you work in health care, do not go to work and contact your health care provider.
- Children who might have *Campylobacter* should not go to child care, especially if they have diarrhea.

## Why does the health department investigate *Campylobacter*?

- Local health departments investigate *Campylobacter* in the community. They do this to track how many people are getting the disease and to help prevent others from getting sick.
- Most people sick with *Campylobacter* are single cases. However, sometimes there are outbreaks when two or more people get sick from the same source. Health departments monitor this disease to identify and stop outbreaks.
- Adams County Health Department is part of a Centers for Disease Control and Prevention monitoring system that studies what puts people at risk for getting *Campylobacter*.

