



CALHOUN COUNTY

Public Health Department

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Fact Sheet

Campylobacteriosis

What is campylobacteriosis?

Campylobacteriosis is an infectious disease caused by *Campylobacter* bacteria.

Campylobacter is one of the most common causes of diarrheal illness in the United States. It causes an estimated 1.5 million illnesses each year, but many cases go undiagnosed or unreported.

How do people get campylobacteriosis?

Campylobacteriosis usually occurs as isolated, sporadic events, not as part of recognized outbreaks.

Most cases are associated with eating raw or undercooked poultry meat or from cross-contamination of other foods by these items. A single drop of raw poultry juice can contain enough bacteria to infect an individual. Infants may get the infection by contact with poultry packages in shopping carts.

Additionally, outbreaks have been associated with unpasteurized dairy products, seafood, untreated water, produce, and puppy feces.

The organism is not usually spread from person to person, but this can happen through exposure to the infected person's diarrhea.

What are the symptoms of campylobacteriosis?

Most people who become ill with campylobacteriosis get diarrhea, cramping, abdominal pain, and fever within two to five days after exposure to the organism. Diarrhea may be bloody and can be accompanied by nausea and vomiting.

How serious is campylobacteriosis?

Most people with *Campylobacter* infection recover completely within a week and infection rarely causes long-term health complications. In rare cases, *Campylobacter* infection can cause irritable bowel syndrome, arthritis, or Guillain-Barré syndrome (GBS).

GBS happens when a person's immune system attacks its own nerves, which can cause muscle weakness and sometimes paralysis. The syndrome usually occurs several weeks after diarrheal illness.

In persons with compromised immune systems, *Campylobacter* occasionally spreads to the bloodstream and causes a serious life-threatening infection.

How is campylobacteriosis diagnosed?

Many kinds of infections can cause symptoms similar to campylobacteriosis such as diarrhea and bloody diarrhea. *Campylobacter* infection is diagnosed through stool, body tissue, or fluid sample testing to detect the bacteria.

What is the treatment for campylobacteriosis?

Almost all persons infected with *Campylobacter* recover without any specific treatment. Patients should drink extra fluids if diarrhea lasts. In more severe cases, antibiotics can be used, and can shorten the duration of symptoms if given early in the illness. Your primary care provider will decide whether antibiotics are necessary.

How can campylobacteriosis be prevented?

- Cook all poultry products thoroughly. Make sure that the meat is cooked throughout (no longer pink) and any juices run clear. All poultry should be cooked to reach a minimum internal temperature of 165°F.
- If you are served undercooked poultry in a restaurant, send it back for further cooking.
- Wash hands with soap before, during, and after preparing food.
- Wash hands with soap after handling raw foods of animal origin and before touching anything else.
- Prevent cross-contamination between animal products and other foods in the kitchen by using separate or cleaning cutting boards, countertop space, and utensils. All preparation tools for animal products should be thoroughly cleaned with soap and hot water before reusing the items.

- Avoid consuming unpasteurized milk and untreated surface water.
- Make sure that persons with diarrhea, especially children, wash their hands carefully and frequently with soap to reduce the risk of spreading the infection.
- Wash hands with soap after contact with pet feces and food.
- Wash hands after changing a diaper or cleaning up any individuals that used the toilet.

How do I get more information on campylobacteriosis?

Calhoun County Public Health Department

Phone: 269-969-6383

 www.facebook.com/CCPublicHealthDepartment/

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Phone: 800-232-4636 (800-CDC-INFO)

Website: www.cdc.gov/foodsafety/diseases/campylobacter

Spanish: <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/publications/p4/p42034s.pdf>

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