

## **CAMPYLOBACTERIOSIS**

### **What is campylobacteriosis?**

Campylobacteriosis is a gastrointestinal illness caused by the bacteria (germ) *Campylobacter*. It is found in the stool of infected persons or animals. In various studies, campylobacter has been found in the feces of 30-100% of chickens, turkeys, and waterfowl.

### **What are the symptoms of campylobacteriosis?**

Symptoms may include fever, fatigue, abdominal cramping, mild to severe diarrhea (may be bloody), nausea, vomiting, and dehydration. It is also possible to be infected and not have any symptoms.

### **How soon do symptoms appear?**

Symptoms appear from 1 to 10 days after exposure, with an average of 2 to 5 days.

### **How is campylobacteriosis spread?**

The infection is spread by infected persons not washing their hands well after using the bathroom (person to person), poultry that is either not cooked or undercooked, contaminated raw food, unpasteurized raw milk or raw milk products, or from water that has not been chlorinated or boiled. Wild and domestic animals (particularly puppies and kittens with diarrhea) may also be a source of infection.

### **How is campylobacteriosis diagnosed and treated?**

Campylobacteriosis is diagnosed by doing a stool culture. Treatment may include antibiotic therapy, but many people recover without any treatment.

### **How can I prevent a campylobacteriosis infection?**

1. Wash hands for 20 seconds with soap and warm water after using the bathroom or changing diapers. Make sure children also wash their hands well.
2. Wrap fresh meats in plastic bags at the market to prevent blood from dripping on other foods.
3. Wash hands well before and after preparing food, especially after handling raw meat or poultry.
4. Disinfect all utensils and kitchen surfaces after contact with raw meat. Use a bleach solution (1/4 teaspoon of bleach in a quart of cool water) to sanitize the kitchen area.
5. Cook all poultry to 165 degrees. Make certain that meat is white (not pink) and juices run clear (not bloody).
6. Do not drink unpasteurized milk or eat milk products made from unpasteurized milk.
7. Do not drink untreated water.
8. Wash your hands after handling animals or pets and their waste.

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People with campylobacteriosis should not work as food handlers, childcare workers, or healthcare workers or attend child care as long as they have diarrhea. They should be diarrhea free for a minimum of 24 hours before returning to work or childcare.

Campylobacteriosis is a Washington State reportable disease and must be reported to your local health department. In Snohomish County, contact the Communicable Disease Surveillance and Response 425.339.5278, Monday-Friday, 8:00 AM- 5:00PM.

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