



# Fact Sheet: Campylobacteriosis

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## What is Campylobacteriosis?

It is an infectious disease caused by a bacteria called *Campylobacter*. It is a common cause of diarrhea worldwide and a major cause of traveler's diarrhea.

## What are the symptoms of campylobacteriosis?

Symptoms usually start 2 to 5 days after being infected with a range of 1 to 10 days. Symptoms include:

- Stomach cramps
- Severe abdominal pain
- Fever
- Diarrhea that may be bloody
- Malaise
- Nausea and vomiting

## How does campylobacteriosis spread?

Campylobacter is spread through direct contact with the bacteria. A person can become infected by:

- Eating food contaminated with the bacteria — most often undercooked meat and poultry
- Drinking contaminated water or unpasteurized milk
- Contact with infected pets (especially puppies and kittens), as well as farm animals

Person to person transmission is uncommon. People who are not treated can spread the bacteria for as long as 2-7 weeks.

## How is campylobacteriosis diagnosed and treated?

The only way to tell if an illness is caused by Campylobacter is to go to a doctor and give a stool

sample to be checked for the pathogen. Most people who have Campylobacteriosis recover without any specific treatment. Patients should drink plenty of fluids during diarrhea episodes to help prevent dehydration as long as the diarrhea lasts.

In more severe cases, doctors may give an antibiotic. It is important that a person take all the medicine even if they feel better. Stopping the antibiotic instead of completing it as instructed, may have a negative outcome such as the bacteria still being inside the body.

Food service workers, healthcare workers, or childcare workers must report their sickness to their immediate supervisor and not work until the illness is over. A medical provider must provide documentation that it is OK for the person to return to work.

## How is campylobacteriosis prevented?

- Cook all meat products thoroughly, especially poultry. All poultry should be cooked to reach an internal temperature of 165° F
- Avoid cross contamination. Do not reuse utensils or cutting boards that were in contact with raw meat or poultry until they are washed in hot soapy water
- Consume only pasteurized milk and dairy products
- Don't drink water from unsafe or unknown sources
- Take care of pets and provide them with proper veterinary care
- Use good hygiene and wash hands after using the bathroom, changing a diaper, and before eating