



Indiana State Department of Health

Epidemiology Resource Center

Quick Facts

About...Campylobacteriosis

What is campylobacteriosis?

Campylobacteriosis (camp-ee-low-BACK-ter-e-OH-sis) is a disease caused by *Campylobacter* bacteria, which live in the intestines of many animals, including birds, farm animals, dogs, and cats. Campylobacteriosis is one of the most commonly reported causes of diarrheal illness in humans. On average, 540 cases of campylobacteriosis are reported in Indiana every year.

How is campylobacteriosis spread?

There are many ways a person can become infected with *Campylobacter*:

- Eating undercooked poultry, such as chicken or turkey
- Eating or drinking unpasteurized dairy products, such as cheese and milk
- Swallowing untreated water usually from lakes or streams
- Direct contact with stool from infected animals including animal cages or cat litter boxes, pets with diarrhea, especially puppies and kittens, and livestock or petting zoos
- Contact with an infected person's stool (person-to-person transmission)

Who is at risk for campylobacteriosis?

Anyone can become ill with campylobacteriosis, but young children, senior adults, pregnant women, and immune suppressed individuals (such as patients undergoing chemotherapy and organ transplants) are at high risk for foodborne illness.

How do I know if I have campylobacteriosis?

A person having diarrhea lasting more than 24 hours should consult a health care provider. The health care provider may collect a stool sample to test.

What are the symptoms of campylobacteriosis?

Symptoms usually appear 2-5 days after exposure, with a range of 1-10 days, and usually last no longer than one week. Symptoms include:

- Diarrhea, which is sometimes bloody
- Stomach cramps
- Fever
- Upset stomach
- Vomiting

Serious complications and death are rare and are usually attributed to an infection of the blood. In some cases, infection may lead to an autoimmune condition known as Guillain-Barre Syndrome, which affects the nervous system and generally results in temporary paralysis.

How can campylobacteriosis be treated?

Most people recover within 5 to 7 days without medical treatment. No treatment is generally recommended, but antibiotics may be used with severe cases. Persons with diarrhea should drink plenty of liquids.

How is campylobacteriosis prevented?

In general, campylobacteriosis can be prevented by practicing good hand washing, good food safety practices, and safe travel outside of the United States.

All information presented is intended for public use. For more information, please refer to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website:

<http://www.cdc.gov/nczved/divisions/dfbmd/diseases/campylobacter/>

Food and Drug Administration, Food Facts for Consumers:

<http://www.fda.gov/Food/ResourcesForYou/Consumers/ucm077286.htm>

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