



Campylobacter

What is Campylobacter?

Campylobacter is a bacterial infectious disease. It is one of the most common diarrheal illnesses in the United States. Some persons infected with campylobacter have no symptoms while others may experience mild to severe symptoms.

How is Campylobacter spread?

Campylobacter is spread by eating food that is contaminated with the bacteria (these germs are often found in undercooked meat and poultry), and by drinking contaminated water or unpasteurized milk. Campylobacter can also be spread from contact with feces of infected dogs, cats and other animals. This organism is not generally spread from person to person, except from infected children in diapers.

How is Campylobacter treated?

Campylobacter is usually diagnosed by a stool culture performed at a laboratory. Mild campylobacter infection will clear up by itself, however, infected persons need to drink plenty of fluids as long as the diarrhea lasts. Antibiotics may be prescribed by a physician for more severe cases of campylobacter. Antibiotics may help shorten the duration of illness and prevent relapse if they are started early in the illness.

How can Campylobacter be prevented?

- Wash hands with soap and water after using the bathroom, before eating and preparing food and after contact with animals or animal feces.
- Wash cooking utensils, cutting boards, and counter tops that come in contact with raw meat or poultry, with hot soapy water.
- Use separate cutting boards for foods of animal origin and other foods.
- Avoid drinking unpasteurized milk and contaminated water.

- Thoroughly cook all poultry, meats and eggs.
- **Symptomatic food handlers, hospital patient care workers, day care center workers and day care attendees should be excluded until diarrhea has subsided.**

Symptoms of Campylobacter:

- Diarrhea (possibly bloody)
- Abdominal pain
- Fever
- Tiredness
- Nausea & Vomiting

Symptoms usually subside in 2 -5 days, however, recovery can take up to 10 days.

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