

## What is campylobacteriosis?

Campylobacteriosis is an illness caused by a bacterial germ that gets into the digestive system. It can cause inflammation of the stomach and intestines.

## What are the symptoms?

Symptoms usually start two to five days after being infected. They include:

- stomach cramps
- stomach ache
- fever
- diarrhea (many loose stools) that may be bloody
- nausea
- vomiting

Some people who are infected might not have any symptoms at all.

## How is campylobacteriosis spread?

The *Campylobacter* bacteria are found in the stool (bowel movement) of domestic and wild birds and animals such as chickens, turkeys, ducks, farm animals, and pets such as puppies, kittens and hamsters. The bacteria can be spread by eating contaminated food, unpasteurized milk, untreated water, or by direct contact with the stool of infected animals or persons.

The bacteria are not usually spread from person to person, but it can happen if the infected person is a small child or has severe diarrhea.

## How is campylobacteriosis diagnosed and treated?

The only way to tell if your illness is caused

by this germ is to see your doctor. A sample of your stool may be checked for the germ.

Most people who have campylobacteriosis recover without any special treatment. Patients should drink plenty of fluids as long as the diarrhea lasts.

In more severe cases, your doctor may give you an antibiotic. **Make sure you take all the medicine even if you feel better.** If you stop the medicine, you may still have the bacteria inside you.

## How can campylobacteriosis be prevented?

- Wash your hands with soap and water after using the bathroom, changing diapers and before preparing food.
- Wash cutting boards and utensils after contact with raw poultry or meats.
- Thoroughly cook all meats and poultry (chicken, turkey).
- Never place cooked food on an unwashed plate that previously held raw meat, poultry, fish or seafood.
- Avoid drinking unpasteurized milk or untreated surface water.
- Keep children with diarrhea out of child care settings.

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- Make sure that people with diarrhea, especially children, wash their hands carefully and often with soap to reduce the risk of spreading the illness.

### How to wash your hands

1. Use warm water and liquid soap.
2. Lather all parts of the hands and rub briskly for 20 seconds. Be sure to include:
  - the backs of your hands
  - between your fingers
  - wrists
3. Use a brush or nail file to clean under your fingernails.
4. Rinse well under warm running water.
5. Dry hands with a paper towel or air dryer. Don't use a cloth towel.
6. Turn off the water using the paper towel instead of your clean hands.

*This fact sheet is for information only and is not meant to be used for self-diagnosis or as a substitute for talking with a health care provider. If you have any questions about campylobacteriosis or think you may have it, call your health care provider.*