

## What is it?

Campylobacteriosis is an infection caused by bacteria called *Campylobacter*. *Campylobacter* is one of the most common causes of diarrhea in the United States.

## Who gets it?

Anyone can get campylobacteriosis. Babies, children, and people with weakened immune systems are more likely to get very ill.

## How does it spread?

A person can get sick if they eat or drink something contaminated with *Campylobacter*. It only takes a few of the bacteria—like one drop of raw chicken juice—to make a person sick.

A person can get sick by:

- Eating raw or undercooked meat, especially chicken
- Eating contaminated food, like from a dirty cutting board
- Drinking unpasteurized (raw) milk or contaminated water
- Not washing their hands after touching animals
- Eating food prepared by someone with campylobacteriosis who has not washed their hands well after using the toilet

## What are the symptoms?

- Mild to severe diarrhea, often with traces of blood
- Fever
- Stomach cramps
- Nausea and vomiting
- Some people do not have any symptoms

Symptoms usually start 2–5 days after exposure to the bacteria and last about a week.

## How is it diagnosed?

Lab tests can find *Campylobacter* in feces (poop), body tissue, or fluids.

## What is the treatment?

Most people do not need medicine to get better. People should drink liquids to stay hydrated. People with, or at risk for, severe illness might need antibiotics. A healthcare provider will decide if a person needs antibiotics.

## How can it be prevented?

- Wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially:
  - After using the toilet or changing diapers
  - Before and after touching food
  - After touching animals
- Keep raw poultry away from other foods
- Cook food to the right internal temperature—at least 165 °F for poultry (Use a food thermometer to check temperatures)
- Do not drink unpasteurized (raw) milk or juice or water that could be unsafe (e.g., water from ponds, lakes, or swimming pools)

## How long is a person contagious?

People can spread campylobacteriosis for a few days to several weeks after their symptoms stop.

## How long should a person stay home?

A person who has diarrhea should stay home until their diarrhea stops.

## How can I get more information?

- For concerns about campylobacteriosis, contact your healthcare provider.
- For questions about foodborne illness, visit Arlington County Public Health's Communicable Disease Program website (<https://www.arlingtonva.us/Government/Programs/Health/Public-Health/Communicable-Disease-Programs>).
- To report a suspected foodborne illness, visit the My Meal Detective website (<https://redcap.vdh.virginia.gov/redcap/surveys/?s=PJACE4A4EY>).
- For more information on *Campylobacter*, visit the CDC's website (<https://www.cdc.gov/campylobacter>).



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