

Campylobacter bacteria are one of the most common causes of diarrhea in the U.S.

SYMPTOMS

- Diarrhea (often bloody)
- Fever
- Stomach cramps or pain
- Nausea and vomiting

Campylobacter may stay in the body up to 10 days. Illness can be mild (lasting 1-2 days) to severe. People can lose a lot of fluids through vomiting and diarrhea which can lead to dehydration (not enough fluid in the body).

Dehydration is serious and may need special medical care. Dehydration is usually more of a problem for young children, the elderly, and those with weakened immune systems. Any time you have vomiting or diarrhea, you should be sure to replace the fluids you lose. You can do this by drinking plenty of water, making a drink that is half water and half juice or soda (without caffeine) or using an oral rehydration fluid. Oral rehydration fluid is a prepackaged mixture of salts and sugar mixed with water that replaces lost minerals.

TREATMENT

People with campylobacter usually get better within a week without treatment. Sometimes doctors will prescribe antibiotics to shorten the length of illness.

HOW IT'S SPREAD

You can get campylobacter:

- by touching or eating raw or undercooked poultry and other meats. As little as one drop of juice from raw chicken can cause illness.
- from unpasteurized (raw) milk or cheese or untreated water.
- from dogs and cats that have campylobacter in their stools (feces).
- from poor handwashing. A person with campylobacter can shed the bacteria in their stool. They can infect others if they don't wash their hands after using the bathroom. An infected baby can spread campylobacter to adults who do not wash their hands after changing diapers.

HOW TO PREVENT CAMPYLOBACTER—READ THE OTHER SIDE OF THIS PAGE

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Food Safety

- Wash hands, cutting boards, countertops, and utensils well after handling raw meat and poultry.
- Use a separate cutting board for meats and poultry, different from foods you will eat without cooking. The best cutting boards do not absorb liquid and are easy to clean (usually made of glass, plastic or stone).
- Cook meats thoroughly. Use a food thermometer to make sure meat is done. Campylobacter is often found in undercooked chicken, hamburger, and sausage. Much of the raw chicken in the US has campylobacter on it.
- Keep hot foods hot and cold foods cold. Temperatures between 40° and 140° F help bacteria to grow in food. Put leftovers in the refrigerator within two hours.
- Do not use unpasteurized (raw) milk or cheese.
- Drink only safe drinking water (tap, bottled or from a well that has been tested).

Pets

- Do not feed raw or undercooked meat to pets.
- Do not allow pets to drink from the toilet.
- Cats and dogs with diarrhea may have campylobacter infection. Wash hands after petting or touching animals or cleaning up their waste. Teach children to do the same.

Handwashing

Wash hands often, especially if you are sick. People caring for anyone with diarrhea or vomiting should wash their hands well, especially before making food, after changing diapers, helping a sick person use the bathroom, handling soiled laundry or cleaning soiled areas.

MORE ABOUT HANDWASHING

How to Wash



1. Wet



2. Soap



3. Scrub 15 –20 seconds



4. Rinse



5. Dry



6. Use towel to turn off faucet

WHEN TO WASH

- Before and after eating
- Before, during and after making and touching food
- After using the bathroom or helping a child use the bathroom
- After changing or checking a diaper
- After coughing, sneezing, blowing your nose and after wiping a child's nose
- After touching blood or body fluids (urine, feces, vomit, etc)
- After touching animals or their waste
- After touching trash
- After touching money
- Whenever hands look, feel or smell dirty

Washing hands is the best way to prevent the spread of many illnesses. No soap and water? Use a hand sanitizer made with alcohol (follow package directions) – then wash with soap and water as soon as you can.