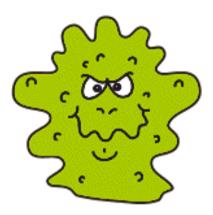
CAMPYLOBACTER



What is Campylobacter?

Campylobacter is a type of bacteria that causes diarrhoea, bloody stools, abdominal pain, fever, nausea and vomiting, headache and muscle pains. The infection usually lasts 2-5 days, but can be prolonged in adults. It may be asymptomatic but rarely can have serious consequences.

How do you catch it?

Campylobacter infection is caught by swallowing contaminated material. Unpasteurized milk, bird-pecked milk, undercooked chicken, pork or other meat, shellfish and non-chlorinated or untreated water (including rivers and lakes) are common sources of infection. Dirty hands especially following farm visits, handling pets or dealing with people with poor hygiene standards also act as a source of infection.

Who is affected?

Campylobacter is an important cause of diarrhoeal illness in all age groups and all parts of the world. In developed countries, children less than 5 years old and young adults have the highest incidence of disease. It is the most commonly identified cause of infectious diarrhoea in developed countries.

Groups at increased risk include those with occupational contact with farm animals or meat, family contacts of cases and travellers to developing countries. Campylobacter is one of the most commonly identified causes of travellers' diarrhoea.

How is it diagnosed?

It is diagnosed by examination and culture of a stool sample.

Is there any treatment?

Most people get better without treatment. Extra fluids are important, especially if you have diarrhoea. This is particularly important for babies, children, pregnant women and the elderly. There are effective antibiotics that can be used in complicated or severe cases. Your family doctor will advise if this is needed. If you are worried about your condition contact your general practitioner.

How long am I infectious for?

You are infectious for as long as the symptoms last.

How can it be prevented?

• Keep raw and cooked foods separate. Never store raw food above cooked food in the fridge. Wash utensils, chopping boards and surfaces thoroughly with a disinfectant such as dettol or bleach after using raw meat to avoid cross-contamination of uninfected foods.

- Meat and poultry should be cooked thoroughly, until the juices run clear. Be especially careful at barbecues.
- Wash hands thoroughly with soap and water, particularly after using or cleaning the toilet, changing a baby's nappy, after touching soiled bedding or clothing, before preparing and eating food, after handling raw meat or poultry, after contact with animals and after gardening or other contact with the soil.
- Avoid unpasteurized milk. Protect foil topped milk bottles from being pecked by birds. Either throw away milk in bottles that have had their foil tops pecked or boil the milk before use.
- ◆ Treat pets promptly when they have diarrhoea.
- Avoid swallowing water when doing water sports in rivers and lakes.
- ♦ Be particularly careful when travelling abroad to countries where sanitation is poor. Boil all your drinking water, including water used for brushing teeth. Avoid ice and exercise caution with salad. Do not eat uncooked food. Eat only fruits you peel yourself.

How can I prevent giving this infection to someone else?

- Don't prepare or handle food for other people until you have been symptomfree for 48 hours.
- If cleaning up diarrhoea/vomit, wash the surface with detergent and water, followed by disinfectant before rinsing and allowing to dry.
- ◆ Clean toilet bowls and seats, flush handles, door handles and taps at least daily with a household cleaner followed by a disinfectant before rinsing and allowing to dry. Use disposable cloths.
- Soiled clothing and bedding should be washed on a hot cycle. After loading the washing machine wipe the outer surface with a disinfectant.
- Wear rubber gloves when cleaning the toilet, cleaning up vomit or diarrhoea and loading the washing machine with soiled clothing.
- Set aside a towel for your own personal use.



What about going to work/school?

The following groups should remain at home for at least two full days until after the diarrhoea has stopped:

- people working in the food and catering business.
- staff of healthcare facilities, particularly those looking after or serving food to, infants or the elderly.
- children aged less than five years old who attend nurseries, nursery schools or playgroups.
- older children or adults who find it difficult to implement good standards of personal hygiene eg. those with learning disabilities or special needs, or where hygienic arrangements are unreliable.

Where can I get more information?

Talk to your general practitioner (GP) or for further information or to raise a question please access www.birmingham.gov.uk or telephone 0121 303 6007.