

# IDRS Infectious Disease Reporting System

Disease Reporting 24 Hours a Day

Columbus Public Health and Franklin County Public Health

## CAMPYLOBACTERIOSIS

*Campylobacter* is the most common bacterial cause of diarrheal illness in the United States.

### Symptoms

Symptoms usually start within 3 - 5 days. For most people, the illness lasts up to a week.

- Early symptoms often include fever, headache, muscle pain and tiredness
- Mild to severe diarrhea (may be bloody)
- Stomach cramps
- Fever (can be high)
- Vomiting
- Some people may have a very mild illness or no symptoms at all.

### Transmission

- The bacteria are most often spread by contaminated food or water. Poorly cooked meat (especially chicken) is a common source.
- Vegetables and uncooked foods can become contaminated by touching raw meat juice or cutting boards used for raw meat.
- People can also get the illness from infected animals (especially puppies and kittens with diarrhea).
- Less commonly, bacteria can also be spread from person to person by touching hands, food, or objects, contaminated with stool (poop).

### Treatment

- Campylobacteriosis can be diagnosed by having a stool (poop) sample tested in a laboratory.
- Most people recover without treatment.
- Patients should drink plenty of fluids as long as the diarrhea lasts.
- If the infection is severe or prolonged, a health care provider may prescribe antibiotics.
- In rare cases, campylobacteriosis can cause chronic arthritis or Guillain-Barré syndrome, a disease that affects the body's nerves.

### Prevention

- Wash hands well with soap and warm water after using the bathroom or changing diapers.
- Wash hands well before and after preparing food, especially after handling raw meat or poultry.
- Do not drink unpasteurized milk or eat cheese made from unpasteurized milk.
- Thoroughly cook all meats, especially poultry. If you are served undercooked meat, send it back for further cooking.
- Wash hands after handling animals or pets and their waste.
- People with campylobacteriosis who attend a child care center or who work in food service, patient care, or child care should stay home until the diarrhea is gone. Ohio Law says that food service workers with campylobacteriosis should take an antibiotic for two days or have two negative stool samples before returning to work.

All information is general in nature and is not intended to be used as a substitute for appropriate professional advice.



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