

Campylobacteriosis

Campylobacter Enteritis

What is campylobacteriosis and what causes it?

Campylobacteriosis (CAMP-EE-lo-back-tier-EE-oo-sis) is caused by a bacteria called *Campylobacter jejuni* (je-june-eye), which is found worldwide in the intestinal tracts of animals. The bacteria are spiral shaped and can cause disease in animals and humans. Most cases of campylobacteriosis are associated with handling or eating raw or undercooked poultry meat.

Campylobacteriosis causes gastrointestinal symptoms, such as diarrhea, cramping, abdominal pain, and fever in domestic animals and humans. Young animals and humans are the most severely affected.

What animals get campylobacteriosis?

Most species of domestic animals including cattle, sheep, chickens, turkeys, dogs, cats, mink, ferrets, pigs, and non-human primates are susceptible to infection.

How can my animal get campylobacteriosis?

Animals can be exposed to the bacteria by **direct contact** with sick animals, by ingestion (**oral**) of fecally contaminated feed or water or by licking or chewing on objects (**fomites**) contaminated with feces from infected animals. Raw or undercooked meat fed to pets can also contain the bacteria.

How does campylobacteriosis affect my animal?

Signs are usually seen 2 to 5 days after exposure to the bacteria and include diarrhea (which may have mucus [clear slime] and sometimes

blood), decreased appetite, vomiting and possibly fever. Disease is generally more severe in young animals. Symptoms usually clear up on their own in 3 to 7 days.

Can I get campylobacteriosis?

Yes. People get campylobacteriosis from eating (**oral**) raw or undercooked poultry or meat, raw (unpasteurized) milk, raw clams, food contaminated with feces or unchlorinated water. The bacteria can also be spread through **direct contact** with infected pets or livestock.

Disease occurs 1 to 10 days after exposure and causes diarrhea, fever, nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain, headache and muscle pain. Most cases clear on their own in 3 to 5 days. Occasionally, some cases can develop into more severe conditions. People with weakened immune systems are at higher risk for these severe or recurrent infections.

Who should I contact, if I suspect campylobacteriosis?

In Animals –

Contact your veterinarian.

In Humans –

Contact your physician.

How can I protect my animal from campylobacteriosis?

Do not feed raw or undercooked meat or poultry to your pets. Do not allow animals to eat contaminated food or water. If your pet develops diarrhea, isolate the animal to limit exposure to other animals and contact your veterinarian.

How can I protect myself from campylobacteriosis?

Use safe food preparation techniques. Wash your hands and all cooking equipment with soap and warm water after handling raw meat. Thaw meats in the refrigerator, never on the counter. Avoid cross contamination in the kitchen by using separate cutting boards for meats and vegetables. Cook meat thoroughly and to the proper cooking temperatures (check meat with a thermometer). Wash your hands frequently after handling animals. Wear disposable gloves if you are in contact with sick animals.

For More Information

CFSPH Technical Fact Sheets.

Campylobacteriosis at <http://www.cfsph.iastate.edu/DiseaseInfo/>

CDC website. Campylobacteriosis at http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dbmd/diseaseinfo/campylobacter_g.htm

