



CAMPYLOBACTERIOSIS FACT SHEET

WHAT IS CAMPYLOBACTER?

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

HOW DO YOU GET CAMPYLOBACTER?

Humans may get Campylobacter directly (via the fecal-oral route) from animals or from consuming contaminated food or water. Direct person to-person spread can occur via the fecal-oral route, but is uncommon.

Major food sources linked to Campylobacter infections include improperly handled or undercooked poultry products, unpasteurized (“raw”) milk and cheeses, and contaminated water. Campylobacter is also commonly found in healthy wild and domestic animals. The most common sources to humans are poultry, cattle, puppies, kittens, swine, sheep, rodents, and birds.

SYMPTOMS

- Fever, diarrhea, abdominal cramps, nausea, headache, muscle pain, and vomiting.
- Symptoms typically appear 2-5 days after exposure and generally last 2 to 10 days.

TREATMENT

Many people infected with Campylobacter will recover without any treatment. In some cases, treatment with antibiotics may be used to reduce the duration of symptoms. Patients should drink plenty of fluids as long as the diarrhea lasts. Discuss treatment options with your doctor.

PREVENTION

- Cook all poultry products thoroughly. Make sure that the meat is cooked throughout (no longer pink), any juices run clear, and the inside is cooked to 165°F (74°C).
- Use separate cutting boards for foods of animal origin and other foods. Carefully clean all cutting boards, countertops, and utensils with soap and hot water after preparing raw food of animal origin.
- Wash hands with soap and water after using the restroom, after changing diapers, before eating or preparing food, and after contact with animals.

PREVENTION

- Any person with campylobacter who attends or works at a child care center shall be excluded until diarrhea has ceased.
- An infected food handler may return to work only after diarrhea has ceased and has completed 48 hours of antimicrobial therapy or has submitted two consecutive stool specimens negative for Campylobacter.

DGHD EFFORTS

Reports of suspected and confirmed cases of disease are made to the Delaware General Health District (DGHD). The DGHD investigates potential sources of illness, conducts surveillance for the spread of disease, and engages in community outreach and education.