

## What kind of infection is it?

Campylobacter is a bacterial infection.

## How do people get infected?

- Campylobacter is a bacteria that lives in the intestines of birds, cats, and sometimes cows, dogs, and hamsters.
- Campylobacter infects persons of all ages but is most common in children younger than 4 years and in young adults.
- Infection usually comes from eating improperly cooked food, particularly chicken, handling raw chicken, or from drinking untreated water or unpasteurized (raw) milk.
- It can occasionally be spread person to person.

## What are the usual symptoms?

- Illness usually starts 2-4 days after exposure.
- Diarrhea, stomach pain or cramps, headache, and fever.
- Diarrhea can be bloody.

## How long does it last?

- Typically 5-7 days.

## How is it treated?

- Prevent dehydration by drinking fluids. Most people will recover without treatment. Warning signs of dehydration include dry mouth, decreased urination, or dizziness.
- Certain types of antibiotics can shorten the illness. Your doctor may prescribe an antibiotic if your illness is more severe or is continuing. Take the antibiotic exactly as instructed.

## Are there possible complications?

- Infection of the blood stream can occur in infants and people with weakened immune systems.
- Rare complications include certain types of arthritis (swelling and pain in the joints), or Guillain Barre syndrome, which causes severe muscle weakness and paralysis.

## Comments:

- Campylobacter can be avoided by washing hands with soap and water after handling raw poultry, washing cutting boards with soap and water after contact with raw poultry, not letting fruits or vegetables contact the juices of raw poultry and cooking poultry thoroughly.
- Wash hands carefully after cleaning up dog or cat droppings, especially diarrhea.
- Do not drink unpasteurized (raw) milk or untreated water from streams or ponds.
- People with diarrhea should not prepare food.

## Resources:

- [CDC Handout](#)