

# Campylobacteriosis Fact Sheet

## **Campylobacteriosis is a bacterial infection of the intestines**

The bacterium, *Campylobacter*, has been found in the feces (stool) of humans and many animals, including chickens or other poultry, and household pets. It is also found in some raw meats, poultry, and unpasteurized milk. Sometimes it is found in streams, ponds and other places where water is not treated with chlorine.

## **Anyone can have a *Campylobacter* infection**

Infection with *Campylobacter* can happen at any age. People at some ages get infection more often than others. Children under the age of five years and young adults (ages 15 to 29 years) are affected more often than other age groups.

## **Symptoms to look for:**

- Watery or sticky diarrhea that may contain blood
- Fever
- Upset stomach, stomach pain, or cramps
- Headache and muscle pain
- Malaise (a general sick feeling)

The illness usually begins 2 to 5 days after eating or drinking infected food or water. The illness does not usually last longer than 7 to 10 days. Sometimes the illness gets better for a short time, then gets worse again. Complications from *Campylobacter* infections are rare.

## **See your doctor if you have diarrhea or possible campylobacteriosis**

- Most cases are not treated with antibiotics, but early treatment with certain antibiotics can make the symptoms go away faster.
- Drink plenty of clear fluids as long as the diarrhea lasts.

## **Infections can be prevented**

- Wash hands after using the toilet or changing diapers.
- Wash hands before preparing any food or drink and before eating.
- Wash hands after handling raw meat or poultry (before touching anything else).
- Use separate cutting boards for meat and poultry.
- Carefully clean all cutting boards, countertops, and utensils with soap and hot water after preparing raw meat or poultry.
- Cook poultry and other meats thoroughly. Using a meat thermometer is the only way to ensure that food is thoroughly cooked.
- Avoid unpasteurized milk and boil all untreated water.
- Wash hands after contact with pets and pet feces. Have puppies and kittens with diarrhea treated for infection.