



CAMPYLOBACTER

Campylobacteriosis is an intestinal illness caused by the bacterium *Campylobacter* of which there are many types.

Who gets this disease?

Anyone can. The illness occurs in all age groups.

How is it spread?

Campylobacter is spread by the fecal-oral route. Water, milk or food (especially poorly cooked poultry products) contaminated with *Campylobacter* may also be a source of infection to people.

What are the symptoms?

Diarrhea (which may be severe and bloody), stomach cramps, vomiting and fever are the usual symptoms.

How soon do symptoms appear?

The symptoms generally appear between one and seven days, but can take longer.

Can a person have this disease without knowing it?

Yes. Although symptoms usually go away after one to 10 days on their own, there may still be germs in the stools for several weeks if treatment is not given.

What is the treatment?

Although antibiotic therapy may not shorten the illness, it does shorten the amount of time the germ is passed in the stools. Therefore, in the childcare setting, treatment is recommended for adults and children with *Campylobacter* in their stools. This will reduce the chance of spread to others.

How can the spread of this disease be prevented?

1. Wash hands thoroughly after using the toilet and diapering children.
2. Wash hands thoroughly before preparing food.
3. Keep children who have diarrhea at home.
4. Make sure children wash their hands after handling pets.
5. Symptomatic staff with positive stool cultures for *Campylobacter* should be excluded from work.
6. Always treat raw poultry, beef and pork as if they are contaminated and handle accordingly.
7. Wrap fresh meats in plastic bags at the market to prevent blood from dripping onto other foods.
8. Refrigerate foods promptly; minimize holding at room temperature.
9. Cutting boards and counters used for preparation should be washed immediately after use to prevent cross contamination with other foods.
10. Be certain all foods (especially beef and poultry products) are thoroughly cooked.

Who should be excluded?

Any person with diarrhea shall be excluded from foodhandling, from childcare agencies and from direct care of hospitalized or institutionalized patients until 48 hours after resolution of symptoms. Children can return to childcare once they are no longer having diarrhea.

Reportable?

Yes. Campylobacteriosis is reportable by New Hampshire law to the Division of Public Health Services, Communicable Disease Control Section at (603) 271-4496 or 800-852-3345 ext. 4496.