



Whatcom County Health Department

FACT SHEET: **CAMPYLOBACTERIOSIS**

What is campylobacteriosis?

It is an infection of the intestines caused by a bacteria called *Campylobacter jejuni*. The bacteria is commonly found in the feces of infected people and animals.

What are the symptoms?

- Infected persons may have mild or no symptoms at all. Symptoms start 1 to 10 days after exposure, but usually within 2–5 days and include:
 1. Mild to severe diarrhea (may be bloody)
 2. Stomach cramps
 3. Fever (can be high)
 4. Vomiting
 5. Convulsions (in severe cases)

How is it spread?

- Infected persons or animals are contagious as long as the bacteria are in the stool. This may be for several days or several weeks.
- People can get the infection by eating improperly cooked poultry or pork, or drinking contaminated water or milk.
- People can also get the illness from infected pets (especially puppies and kittens with diarrhea), or from handling wild animals.
- The bacteria can also be spread from an infected person to others when bacteria leave the body in the person's stool and enter in another person when hands, food, or objects, contaminated with stool, are put in the mouth.

Diagnosis and treatment

- The disease can be diagnosed from a stool sample.
- Most people recover without treatment. If the infection is severe or prolonged, erythromycin may be prescribed.

- Wash hands well with soap and warm water after using the bathroom or changing diapers. Make sure children also wash their hands well after going to the bathroom.
- Wash hands well before and after preparing food, especially after handling raw meat or poultry.
- Do not drink unpasteurized milk or eat cheese made from unpasteurized milk.
- Thoroughly cook all meats, especially poultry.
- Make sure that other foods, such as fruits or vegetables, do not come into contact with cutting boards or knives that have been used with raw meat or poultry. Wash them carefully with soap and warm water to avoid cross-contamination.
- Wash hands after handling animals or pets and their waste.

Prevention

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HEALTHIER WASHINGTON



For more information, or to report a campylobacteriosis case, call the Whatcom County Health Department at (360) 676-6724.