

Quick Facts

About...*Campylobacteriosis*

What is campylobacteriosis?

Campylobacteriosis (camp-ee-low-BACK-ter-e-OH-sis) is a contagious disease caused by *Campylobacter* bacteria, which live in the intestines of many animals, including birds, farm animals, dogs, and cats. There are over 20 types of *Campylobacter* bacteria. Campylobacteriosis is one of the most commonly reported causes of diarrheal illness in humans. On average, 540 cases of campylobacteriosis are reported in Indiana every year.

How is campylobacteriosis spread?

There are many ways a person can become infected with *Campylobacter*:

- Eating undercooked poultry, such as chicken or turkey.
- Eating or drinking unpasteurized dairy products, such as cheese and milk. It is illegal to sell unpasteurized dairy products in Indiana due to the high risk of infection.
- Swallowing untreated water, e.g., from lakes or streams.
- Having direct contact with stool from infected animals, including:
 - Animal cages or cat litter boxes
 - Pets suffering from diarrhea, especially puppies and kittens
 - Livestock or petting zoos
- Having contact with an infected person's stool (person-to-person transmission):
 - Not washing hands after contact with stool from a contaminated surface or diaper/linen and ingesting the bacteria. Facilities where there are clients/patients who are not toilet trained, such as day care facilities, have an increased risk of transmission.

- Having sex that involves contact with stool.

The most common sources of *Campylobacter* outbreaks are contaminated food, especially undercooked poultry, unpasteurized milk, and untreated water.

What are the symptoms of campylobacteriosis?

- Diarrhea, which is sometimes bloody
- Stomach cramps
- Fever
- Upset stomach
- Vomiting

Symptoms usually appear 2-5 days after exposure, with a range of 1-10 days. For most people, *Campylobacter* causes symptoms that usually last no longer than one week.

Serious complications and death are rare and are usually attributed to an infection of the blood. In some cases, infection with *Campylobacter* may lead to an autoimmune condition known as Guillain-Barre Syndrome, which affects the nervous system and generally results in temporary paralysis. Being infected with *Campylobacter* and recovering from the infection does not provide any immunity against reinfection.

How do I know if I have campylobacteriosis?

A person having diarrhea lasting more than 24 hours should consult a health care provider. The health care provider may collect a stool sample to test for *Campylobacter*.

How is campylobacteriosis treated?

Most people recover within 5 to 7 days without medical treatment. No treatment is generally recommended. However, persons with diarrhea should drink plenty of liquids. Antibiotics may be used to treat persons with severe cases.

Is campylobacteriosis a reportable disease?

Yes. Health care providers or laboratories must report cases of campylobacteriosis to the local health department (LHD) or the Indiana State Department of Health (ISDH) within 72 hours of diagnosis. The LHD will contact all cases diagnosed with *Campylobacter* so a possible exposure can be determined to help prevent others from becoming ill.

How can campylobacteriosis be prevented?

In general, campylobacteriosis can be prevented by strictly adhering to the following guidelines:

- Practice good hygiene:
 - Thoroughly wash hands with soap and water after using the restroom; after assisting someone with diarrhea and/or vomiting; after contact with animals and reptiles; after swimming; before, during, and after food preparation; and after exposure to raw meat products (please refer to Quick Facts about Hand Washing).
 - Clean food preparation work surfaces, equipment, and utensils with soap and water before, during, and after food preparation, especially after contamination with raw meat products.
- Separate raw and cooked foods:
 - Avoid cross-contamination by keeping uncooked meat products and marinades separate from produce, ready-to-eat foods, and cooked foods.
 - Use separate equipment and utensils for handling raw foods.
 - Clean food-preparation work surfaces, equipment, and utensils with soap and water before, during, and after food preparation, especially after contact with raw meat products.
- Maintain safe temperatures:
 - Maintain proper temperatures during refrigeration (<40°F), freezing (<2°F), holding (keep food hot or at room temperature for no longer than 2 hours), and chilling (chill immediately and separate into smaller containers if needed).
 - Thoroughly cook all food items to USDA recommended safe minimum internal temperatures:
 - 145°F – steaks, roasts, and fish
 - 160°F – pork, ground beef, and egg dishes
 - 165°F – chicken breasts and whole poultry
 - If the temperature cannot be checked, cook poultry until juices run clear and the meat is no longer pink.
- Eat safe foods (Remember: Contaminated foods may look and smell normal):
 - Do not eat undercooked meat, poultry, eggs, expired foods, or unpasteurized dairy products or juice.
 - Wash all produce before eating raw or cooking.
 - Use treated water for washing, cooking, and drinking.

- Avoid swallowing untreated water.
- Protect others:
 - Persons with diarrhea and/or vomiting should not prepare food or provide health care services for others and should limit direct contact with others as much as possible.
 - Persons with diarrhea and/or vomiting should not attend a day care facility or school.
 - Persons with diarrhea and/or vomiting shall be excluded from employment involving food handling (Indiana Retail Food Establishment Sanitation Requirements, 410 IAC 7-24-122).
 - Do not change diapers near recreational water.
 - Do not go swimming or use hot tubs if you have diarrhea and for at least 2 weeks after diarrhea stops.
- Handle animals safely:
 - Wash hands after contact with farm animals, petting zoos, pets (including reptiles and amphibians), especially if they are suffering from diarrhea, and after contact with pet food/treats (including live or frozen rodents).
 - Keep pets out of food-preparation areas.
 - Do not clean pet or reptile cages in the kitchen sink or in the bathtub.
- Safe travel outside of the United States:
 - Drink bottled beverages and water, even when brushing teeth.
 - Do not eat uncooked fruits or vegetables unless you peel them yourself.
 - Do not eat foods or beverages from street vendors.
 - Do not consume local water or ice.

Where can I learn more about campylobacteriosis?

To search Indiana data and statistics:

<http://www.in.gov/isdh/18888.htm>

To search the Indiana Food Protection Program:

<http://www.in.gov/isdh/20640.htm>

To search disease information:

<http://www.cdc.gov/ncezid/dfwed/>
www.cfsan.fda.gov/~mow/chap4.html

To search for national data, statistics, and outbreaks:

www.cdc.gov/mmwr/

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