



What is Campylobacter?

Campylobacter is a bacteria that causes an infection of the bowel. It is usually caught from eating contaminated or poorly handled food, especially chicken. Other sources are infected household pets, farm animals, or an infected person who handles food.

What are the symptoms?

About 3 - 5 days after contact with the bacteria, flu-like symptoms develop. Diarrhoea then develops, often with severe abdominal pain. Nausea, vomiting and fever often occur. It usually lasts for 3 - 5 days but diarrhoea can sometimes persist for 10 days.

How is it treated?

Usually extra fluid and rest are advised. However, a doctor should always be consulted and may recommend antibiotic treatment in selected cases.

How is it spread?

People become infected when they swallow the bacteria. This can happen:

- When handling food, especially undercooked chicken or meat or unpasteurised milk
- When drinking from an unchlorinated water supply (eg tank or bore water)
- From contact with infected pets, especially puppies and kittens with diarrhoea
- A recent study has also linked caged birds with the disease
- From contact with the manure from farm animals
- From contact with infected people, including children and babies.

How to prevent it?

Wash hands carefully:

- After going to the toilet or changing nappies
- Before handling food
- After touching uncooked poultry or meat
- After playing or working with domestic animals or pets.

Look after food carefully:

- Thaw frozen meat completely
- Cook meat and poultry thoroughly
- Keep raw meat and poultry separate from other foods in the refrigerator.
- Store raw foods underneath cooked foods to prevent contamination
- Clean knives, cutting boards and other surfaces after contact with raw meat and poultry.

Toi Te Ora Our Environment

Our Responsibility



Remember

- Wash your hands:
 - After going to the toilet
 - After playing or working with animals
 - Before handling food
 - After touching raw meat or chicken
- Don't handle food if you have diarrhoea - it may spread
- Avoid contact with infants, very elderly or ill people while you have diarrhoea.

For more information contact a Health Protection Officer at Toi Te Ora Public Health Service, free phone 0800 221 555.