

# CAMPYLOBACTERIOSIS \*

## (CAMPYLOBACTER)



### **What is Campylobacteriosis?**

Campylobacteriosis is an infection of the intestines caused by the Campylobacter bacteria. Animals may also be infected but rarely show signs of illness.

### **How is it spread?**

Campylobacter organisms can be found in uncooked food such as raw milk, raw milk products, meat, meat products, and poultry. Ready-to-eat items may be contaminated by infected products or utensils. Infected individuals, that do not properly wash their hands after using the restroom or changing diapers, may transfer fecal material and the bacteria to food or object that others will put in their mouth. Also, anyone may contract this illness by having contact with the feces of infected animals.

### **What are the signs and symptoms?**

The signs and symptoms of this illness may include diarrhea (frequently bloody), abdominal pain, fever, nausea and sometimes vomiting. Loss of appetite and loose stools often persist for several days. Dehydration, especially among infants, may be severe.

### **What is the incubation period and how long is it communicable?**

The incubation period is usually two to five (2-5) days with a range of one to ten (1-10) days depending on the dose ingested. Persons are contagious throughout the course of infection, usually from several days to several weeks (2-7). The period of communicability may be shortened to a few days with the use of antibiotics.

### **How can Campylobacteriosis be prevented?**

The best prevention is to frequently wash your hands vigorously with soap and water before eating and after using the restroom, handling diapers (use gloves), and cleaning after/caring for a symptomatic individual. Proper disposal of diapers and disinfection of changing tables will help stop the spread of the virus. Also, when preparing food, thoroughly cook all foods derived from animal sources, particularly poultry and eggs, pasteurize all milk and chlorinate or boil all water supplies.

Finally, recognize and control diarrhea among household animals and pets. It is recommended to use spray bottles to apply the disinfectant (1 part bleach to 9 part cool water; prepared daily) to contaminated surfaces such as toilets, sinks, floors, tables, water fountains or any areas where a sick individual has been.

### **What should I do about it?**

Persons who have these symptoms should see their physicians. This is a reportable disease to the Santa Rosa County Health Department (SRCHD). Children can NOT be in school/childcare and will need to be symptom free for 24 hours before being readmitted.

Sensitive workers should not work when sick and will need a certified clearance from the Santa Rosa County Health Department (two (2) negative stool cultures, taken 24 hours apart) to return to work. Antibiotics must be completed and cleared from the body before the two stool cultures are taken. The SRCHD Epidemiology Program may change exclusion rules at any time.

For more information, please contact the SRCHD's Epidemiology Program at 850-983-5200.