



CAMPYLOBACTERIOSIS

WHAT IS CAMPYLOBACTERIOSIS?

- Campylobacteriosis is a gastrointestinal disease caused by bacteria called *Campylobacter*.
- In Australia, *Campylobacter* is the most common causes of bacterial gastroenteritis and is frequently associated with the consumption of contaminated poultry.
- Infection can occur at any time of the year but is more common in the warmer months.
- Testing of faeces (poo) samples will determine if you have the infection.
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WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF CAMPYLOBACTERIOSIS?

Anyone can be affected but infection is more common in children under 5 years of age and young adults. Symptoms develop 2- 5 days after getting infected with the bacteria.

- Diarrhoea (this may contain blood or mucous)
- Stomach cramps or stomach pain
- Fever
- Nausea and vomiting.

HOW IS CAMPYLOBACTERIOSIS SPREAD?

- *Campylobacter* is mainly spread to humans by eating or drinking contaminated food (mainly poultry), water or unpasteurised milk.
- *Campylobacter* can also be spread via the hands of an infected person, or from contact with pets (especially puppies and kittens) and farm animals that carry the bacteria.
- People can be infectious for 48 hours or longer after symptoms resolve.

WHO IS AT RISK SEVERE ILLNESS FROM CAMPYLOBACTERIOSIS?

Anyone can get infected with *Campylobacter*; however, the following people are at higher risk of severe illness:

- Babies and children under 5 years of age,
- People aged 65 years and older,
- People with weakened immune systems or with other medical conditions,
- People who work with farm animals.

HOW CAN CAMPYLOBACTERIOSIS BE PREVENTED?

- **Personal hygiene:** thoroughly wash your hands with soap and warm water after going to the toilet, after changing infants in nappies, before handling and eating food, after handling raw food (especially raw poultry), after gardening and after contact with pets and other animals.
- **Cooking:** cooking food thoroughly kills *Campylobacter*. Avoid raw or undercooked meat, poultry, or eggs. Poultry, including liver, should not be eaten if pink in the middle.
- **Food preparation:**
 - Do not wash raw chicken meat.
 - Store raw foods especially meat in sealed containers in the bottom of the fridge or freezer to prevent any fluid dripping or spilling onto other ready-to eat food. Cover all foods in the refrigerator and freezer to protect them from contamination.
 - Use different chopping boards, trays, utensils, and plates when preparing raw foods and ready to eat food. If you have only one chopping board wash it well in hot soapy water before reuse.



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- Dry dishes with a different cloth to that used for wiping hands or bench tops, wash dish cloths regularly.
- People experiencing gastrointestinal symptoms should not handle or serve food, care for the elderly or children until 2 days after the symptoms have stopped.
- **Temperature control:** Keep cold food below 5°C and hot food above 60°C.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN IF I GET CAMPYLOBACTERIOSIS?

- Campylobacteriosis is notifiable in Victoria.
- The Gippsland Region Public Health Unit will be notified and will investigate outbreaks within Gippsland to try to identify a common exposure such as a food source.
- Where a common food is implicated, the OzFood Network will undertake a further environmental investigation and initiate control measures.
- Most people recover from Campylobacteriosis in 1-2 weeks with rest and fluids. In severe cases, your doctor may prescribe antibiotics to reduce duration of illness.
- Children attending childcare services, food handlers or healthcare workers with Campylobacteriosis should remain at home until 48 hours have passed since last symptom.

Additional Information:

[Campylobacter infection | healthdirect](#)

[Gastroenteritis - campylobacteriosis - Better Health Channel](#)