



Fact Sheet

FOOD SAFETY FACTS ON *CAMPYLOBACTER*

What is foodborne illness?

Foodborne illness occurs when a person consumes food contaminated with pathogenic bacteria, viruses or parasites. This condition is often called “food poisoning”. Many cases of foodborne illness go unreported because their symptoms often resemble flu symptoms. The most common symptoms of foodborne illness may include stomach cramps, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea and fever.

What are *Campylobacter jejuni* and Campylobacteriosis?

- *Campylobacter jejuni* is a bacterium commonly found in the intestines of poultry, cattle, swine, rodents, wild birds and such household pets as cats and dogs. It has also been known to be found in untreated surface water (caused by fecal material moving through the environment) and manure.
- Humans may develop an illness called campylobacteriosis if infected by *Campylobacter jejuni* bacteria.

What are the symptoms?

- Symptoms may include fever, headache and muscle pain, followed by diarrhea, stomach pain, cramps, nausea and vomiting.
- Further complications include Guillain-Barré Syndrome, meningitis, septicemia, urinary tract infections and, in very rare cases, reactive arthritis (this arthritis is almost always short term).
- Symptoms of infection usually occur within 2 to 5 days after the bacteria have been ingested and usually do not last longer than 10 days.
- It takes most people anywhere from a few days to a few weeks to recover.

Where could I come in contact with *Campylobacter jejuni*?

- People usually develop *Campylobacter jejuni* infections when they eat undercooked poultry or drink raw milk or non-chlorinated water.
- *Campylobacter jejuni* may be transmitted from hands that were not washed properly after petting infected cats and dogs (usually kittens and puppies) whose coats could contain infected fecal matter.

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What can I do to protect myself and my family?

- Keep raw foods cold until they are to be cooked. Refrigerate or freeze raw poultry and meat immediately after purchase.
- After handling and preparing raw meat and poultry, wash your hands and sanitize all utensils and work surfaces with a mild bleach solution (5 ml/1 tsp. bleach per 750 ml/3 cups water).
- Wash your hands after petting cats and dogs.
- Cook poultry and meat thoroughly (juice runs clear and no visible pink meat) to eliminate the risk of infection. Use a thermometer – internal temperatures for whole chicken and parts should reach 82°C-85°C (180°F-185°F), turkey pieces should reach 77°C (170°F); beef steaks and roasts should reach internal temperatures as follows: medium rare at 63°C (145 °F), medium at 71°C (160°F), and well at 75°C (170°F). Pork chops and ribs should be cooked to 71°C (160°F). Ground meats should be cooked to 71°C (160°F).
- Separate raw meat and poultry from ready-to-eat foods at all times, including in the shopping cart, grocery bags, refrigerator and during preparation.
- Drink only pasteurized milk.
- Drink water from a safe supply.

What are producers and processors doing to protect consumers?

- From the farm to the retail store, efforts are being made to reduce the risks associated with *Campylobacter jejuni* throughout the food production process.
- Individual companies and industry associations are working to develop systems that will further enhance the safety of their product.

How does the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) protect consumers?

- The CFIA administers and enforces 12 Acts governing food safety and food inspection within Canada and at our borders.
- CFIA inspectors monitor food processing in federally registered slaughtering and processing establishments.
- CFIA inspectors also check packaging dates and labels in retail stores.
- CFIA laboratories continue to develop quick, cost-effective tests to better detect new and existing pathogens in foods and food manufacturing processes.
- In cooperation with industry, the CFIA is moving towards a modernized, science-based inspection system.

For more information on foodborne illness and safe food handling practices, visit the Canadian Food Inspection Agency website at www.inspection.gc.ca