Campylobacter

CARLISLE CITY COUNCIL

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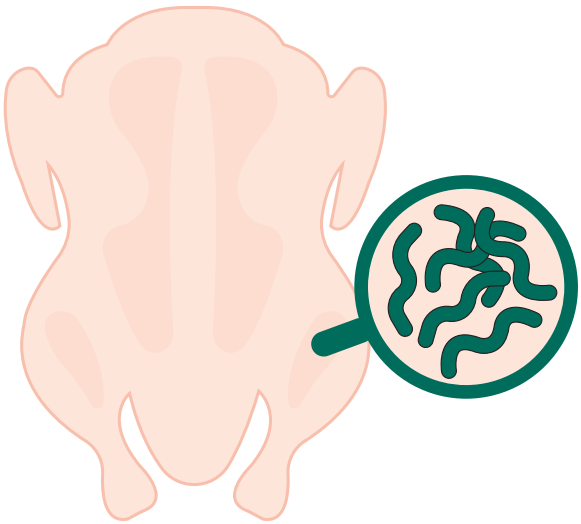
Campylobacter

What is Campylobacter?

Campylobacter is a type of bacteria that causes food poisoning. It is the most common cause of food poisoning in Britain. Symptoms include diarrhoea, vomiting, stomach pains and cramps, fever and generally feeling unwell.

How do you get infected with Campylobacter?



You usually get infected by eating contaminated food. The bacteria are commonly found in raw meat and in particular, raw poultry. It is also possible to get Campylobacter from infected pets and other animals.

It is impossible to tell whether food is contaminated with Campylobacter from its appearance. It will look, smell and taste normal so correct handling and cooking are very important.

How can you avoid getting infected with Campylobacter?

- Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and warm water:
  - before preparing and eating food.
  - after handling raw food.
  - after going to the toilet or changing a baby's nappy.
  - after contact with pets and other animals.
  - after working in the garden.
- Keep cooked food away from raw food.
- Store raw foods below cooked or ready to eat foods in the fridge to prevent contamination.
- Cook food thoroughly, especially meat, so that it is piping hot, as this will destroy any Campylobacter bacteria.
- Keep all kitchen surfaces and equipment including knives, chopping boards, and dish cloths clean.
- Do not drink untreated water from lakes, rivers or streams.

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- You should pay special attention to hygiene during farm visits, washing hands after any contact with animals, and eating only in designated areas.
- If someone has Campylobacter wash all dirty clothes, bedding and towels on the hottest wash cycle of the washing machine. Clean toilet seats, toilet bowls, flush handles, taps and wash hand basins after use with detergent and hot water followed by a household disinfectant.

What are the symptoms of Campylobacter and how long do they last?

Symptoms include diarrhoea, vomiting, stomach pains and cramps, fever and generally feeling unwell.

How do you treat Campylobacter?

Most people who have Campylobacter recover without any treatment within two to five days, although it can sometimes take up to 10 days to get better. It is important to drink plenty of fluids as diarrhoea and vomiting can lead to dehydration and you can lose important sugars and minerals from your body. Your doctor will advise you on the most suitable form of treatment.

Do you need to stay off work or school?

Yes. While you are ill and have symptoms, you are infectious. You can return to work or school once you have been free from diarrhoea for 48 hours.

If you work with vulnerable groups such as the elderly, the young, those in poor health, or handle food, it is important that you inform your employer if you are suffering from a Campylobacter infection.

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Public Health England, Environmental Health Team and Campylobacter

Public Health England (PHE) is an executive agency of the Department of Health and Social Care who provide advice on controlling outbreaks of infectious diseases. Their work involves trying to identify the source of infections to prevent other people becoming infected. They also monitor outbreaks and look for patterns and trends. This work is undertaken with assistance from local Environmental Health Teams within councils. These teams are notified of infectious diseases by PHE and contact patients to obtain as must information about their illness as possible to try to identify how the infection was acquired, offer advice and prevent the spread of illness.

If you would like further information, please contact the Food & Public Protection Team at Carlisle City Council on **01228 817329**.

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