

Campylobacteriosis

Fact Sheet

What is Campylobacteriosis?

Campylobacter is a bacteria (germ) that causes infections in both animals and humans. Symptoms of *Campylobacteriosis* include diarrhoea (which may be bloody), abdominal pain and cramping, nausea, and vomiting. Although there is more than one species of *Campylobacter* bacteria, it is *Campylobacter jejuni* that is the most common cause of illness in humans. *Campylobacteriosis* occurs more frequently in the warmer months.

How did I acquire Campylobacter?

Most people become sick from *Campylobacter* through handling or eating poultry meat (e.g., chicken, turkey) that is raw or not properly cooked or through cross-contamination of foodstuffs. For example, if you cut raw chicken on a cutting board and then use the unwashed board or knife to cut fruit, the bacteria from the raw chicken on the board and knife can easily spread to the fruit.

It is also possible to get sick from contact with the faeces of sick animals (especially kittens and puppies) and from contact with the faeces of an infected person with diarrhoea.

Large community outbreaks of *Campylobacter* are usually related to the drinking of infected unpasteurised milk or infected water.

Who is at risk from Campylobacter infections?

All people can be at risk from *Campylobacter* infections.

How can Campylobacter be spread?

The eating, drinking, or ingesting something that has been contaminated by the bacteria (germ), *Campylobacter*, spreads *Campylobacteriosis*.

How will my care change whilst in hospital?

- Regular and thorough hand hygiene is one of the most successful ways to prevent the spread of **ALL** infections. (See below).
- A sign is placed outside your door to alert hospital staff for the need to use special protective infection control precautions. This sign also alerts visitors of the need to speak with nursing staff prior to entering your room.
- The hospital staff will wear protective apparel such as gloves and an apron or gown when they enter your room.
- You will be allocated a private room with your own ensuite facilities. We ask that your movement throughout the ward is limited to essential movement only, such as physiotherapy. If you are unsure about when you can leave your room, please speak to the nursing staff.

Good Hand Hygiene Practices

Hand Hygiene is the most effective way to prevent **ALL** infections, including the flu and the common cold.

Encourage your family and friends to learn and maintain good hand hygiene practices every day. Please refer to the hand hygiene information in the patient information booklet or hand hygiene leaflet available from the Infection prevention and control team.

During your stay in hospital you may have seen the staff using an alcohol-based hand rub, as an alternative to soap and water. Alcohol-based hand rubs or gels can be used for hand hygiene as long as your hands are not visibly soiled / dirty. There are a variety of brands on the market and are available for purchase at most pharmacies. You may choose to use this type of product at home.

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Can I still have visitors?

Yes – you can still have visitors, including pregnant women, infants, and babies. However, we ask that you do not allow your visitors to use the toilet facilities in your room. Public facilities are available throughout the hospital. Please ask the staff for directions.

If a friend or relative who wishes to visit has had recent surgery, has an illness, or has a compromised immune system they may wish to contact the Infection Control staff or speak with their GP for further advice.

To prevent the spread of *Campylobacteriosis* the nursing staff will provide education to your visitors about the need to perform hand hygiene before and after they enter your room. We ask that you also encourage your visitors to do this. They can use both soap and water at the wall sink in the ward, or the alcohol hand rub provided inside and outside your room.

What happens when I go home?

- Once your diarrhoea has stopped the risk of infection is dramatically reduced.
- However, when you return home it is important for you, your family, and your friends to continue the good hand hygiene practices that you have been taught in hospital every day.
- If you are still experiencing episodes of diarrhoea then it is important that any family member or close contact wear gloves for the washing of clothes, linen, crockery, and cutlery or for the cleaning of the bath, toilet and shower.
- You should not return to food preparation duties until you are no longer experiencing any diarrhoea.
- It is important that anyone assisting you with close personal care wears gloves if they are going to be in contact with any faeces, urine, wounds, or blood. They must wash their hands

well, after removing their gloves and disposing of the gloves immediately in the rubbish bin.

- If you have more than one toilet in your home, designate one toilet for yourself and one for all other people until you are no longer experiencing episodes of diarrhoea.

Safe Food Preparation

- Cook all poultry products thoroughly, until the meat is no longer pink, and the juices run clear.
- Always perform hand hygiene after handling raw meat / poultry and before you touch anything else.
- Use separate cutting boards for raw meat / poultry and other foods.
- Always clean work surfaces, cutting boards and utensils well with hot soapy water after preparing raw meat / poultry.
- Bacteria grow rapidly between 5 and 60 degrees Celsius. Always store cold foods in the refrigerator until you are ready to cook or serve them. Serve hot food steaming hot, not lukewarm.

Where can I get further information?

You can talk to your doctor or the nursing staff. If you wish to speak with the Infection Control department, ask your nurse to contact us. Our office hours are 8am to 4pm Monday to Friday. Our contact numbers are: (02) 9480 9433 or (02) 9480 9732.

Alternatively, please call your local Public Health Unit on 1300 066 055

References

NSW Dept of Health; Infection Prevention and Control Policy PD2017_013

National Health and Medical Research Council; Australian Guidelines for the Prevention and Control of Infection in Healthcare (2019)

NSW Dept. of Health; Communicable Disease Factsheet - Campylobacteriosis (12 May 2017)

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC); Campylobacter (Campylobacteriosis) Information Sheets (April 14, 2021)