

# Campylobacter Fact Sheet

## What is Campylobacter?

If you have the Campylobacter infection you may be experiencing the following symptoms:

- Flu like illness
- Vomiting
- Headaches
- Stomach ache
- Feeling sick
- Diarrhoea (often blood stained)

The symptoms can last for up to 10 days, although in some cases for 2 weeks or more.

The period between catching the germ and becoming ill is usually 2-5 days.

If symptoms persist, medical advice should be sought as medication may be appropriate.

## How did I get Campylobacter?

Possible routes of infection are as follows:

- Eating or drinking contaminated food, milk or water.
- Raw unpasteurised (green top) milk and raw meat and poultry may be contaminated. However, thorough cooking of meat and poultry and the pasteurisation of milk will destroy the germ.
- The germ can also be found in surface water which if accidentally swallowed may cause illness. Drinking unchlorinated water also presents a risk.
- Infection from pets.
- Puppies and kittens may harbour the germ that causes the disease.
- Infection is possible when there is accidental transfer of the germ from faeces to mouth.

## Precautionary measures

- Wash and dry hands carefully after handling raw meat and poultry.
- Keep raw meat and poultry away from other foods. Wash utensils and chopping boards with hot water and detergent.
- Make sure meat and poultry are properly cooked particularly at barbecues which are a common source of infection.
- Wash hands regularly and thoroughly.
- Regularly disinfect toilets, flush handles, taps and door handles in the immediate vicinity of the WC.

Avoid swallowing water when participating in water sports, and avoid drinking water which has not been chlorinated.

Be particularly careful when travelling abroad to countries where there is poor sanitation and water supplies are primitive.

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