

## Campylobacteriosis

### Background Information

Campylobacteriosis is a common foodborne bacterial infection, characterised by severe diarrhoea and abdominal pain.

### Organism:

The following organisms are the most common causes of campylobacteriosis:

- *Campylobacter jejuni*
- *Campylobacter coli*

### Incidence and Transmission:

Campylobacteriosis is the most common cause of infectious diarrhoea in the UK. It mostly affects very young children and the elderly.

Campylobacter species are naturally found in the gut of many birds (particularly poultry) and animals (including cattle and domestic animals). These bacteria rarely cause disease in animals.

Humans can become infected by eating raw or undercooked meat, but also by ingesting unpasteurised milk or untreated water. The disease can spread directly from infected animals (pets and farm animals) or animal products and can be spread from person to person where hygiene is poor.

### Occupations and processes where Campylobacter may present a risk

Occupational exposure to Campylobacter may occur in those who:

- are in contact with infected animals or humans;
- work with materials or products from infected animals; or
- are in contact with water contaminated with animal faeces.

Occupations where there may be a risk of occupationally acquired campylobacteriosis include:

- farmers - particularly poultry farmers;
- bird keepers;
- abattoir workers, meat processing plant workers and butchers;
- dairy workers;
- veterinary surgeons;

- workers in outdoor leisure industries in contact with water, eg watersports instructors;
- sewage and waste water workers; and
- healthcare and care workers.

### **Clinical Information**

The incubation period for the disease is typically 2–5 days (but may be 1–11 days).

The main symptoms are severe diarrhoea and abdominal pain. Most people recover fully within 10 days. Rehydration therapy is the only treatment needed in most cases, although antibiotics are given in severe cases.

Anyone with severe symptoms should seek medical attention. Diagnostic testing can be carried out to confirm campylobacter infection.

### **Control**

The following control measures reduce the risk of infection:

- Good occupational hygiene practices should be followed, especially washing with warm water and soap.
- Suitable protective clothing should be worn.
- A suitable disinfectant should be used.
- Avoid swallowing water when participating in watersports.
- Unpasteurised milk should not be consumed.

### **Further Information**

[Public Health England – Campylobacter](#)