

Campylobacter

Campylobacter is a bacterial infection that causes gastroenteritis ('gastro') in humans.

Signs and Symptoms:

Most people with *Campylobacter* will experience one or more of the following symptoms within 2 – 5 days of initial infection:

- diarrhoea (this may contain blood or mucous)
- stomach cramps
- fever
- nausea and vomiting.

Symptoms associated with *Campylobacter* infections can typically last between 2 and 10 days.

Cause:

Campylobacter infection is usually acquired by one of the following:

- eating contaminated food, especially undercooked chicken
- poor hygiene when handling and preparing raw chicken
- drinking untreated water or unpasteurised (raw) milk
- eating food (such as salad) that has been cross-contaminated with *Campylobacter* from raw meats/chicken
- poor hygiene after handling young pets or having close contact with farm animals (e.g. petting)
- person to person spread due to poor hygiene.

Treatment:

Talk to your doctor if you think you have *Campylobacter* infection. Your doctor may arrange a faecal sample for testing to confirm the infection.

If the results of the tests show that you have *Campylobacter* infection the doctor will provide advice and appropriate treatment.

In severe or complicated cases your doctor may prescribe antibiotics to reduce the duration of the illness.

Ongoing management:

Do not go to work or school for at least 24 hours after symptoms have ceased or 48 hours if you are a food handler, child care worker, or health care worker.

Do not handle or prepare food for the family or household for at least 24 hours after symptoms have ceased.

Wash and dry your hands thoroughly after going to the toilet.

Prevention:

To minimise the risk of *Campylobacter* infection:

- cook all poultry products thoroughly. Make sure the meat is cooked throughout (no longer pink) and any juices that run are clear
- wash hands with soap and warm water and dry thoroughly before preparing food, and after handling raw meat and chicken
- use separate cutting boards for raw meat and other foods to prevent cross-contamination in the kitchen
- carefully clean all cutting boards, work surfaces and utensils with detergent and hot water after preparing raw meat or chicken
- avoid drinking unpasteurised milk and untreated water
- wash hands thoroughly after handling pets, especially young kittens and puppies.

Help and assistance:

For further information on *Campylobacter* please contact:

- your local doctor
- community health centre
- nearest [public health unit](https://www.health.qld.gov.au/system-governance/contact-us/contact/public-health-units) (<https://www.health.qld.gov.au/system-governance/contact-us/contact/public-health-units>)
- 13 HEALTH (13 43 25 84) 24 hours a day 7 days a week for the cost of a local call

If you have a concern about a food product or a food business, you can make a complaint or seek advice from the relevant government agency.

Visit the Queensland Government [Report a food safety issue](https://www.qld.gov.au/health/staying-healthy/environmental/food/report-food-safety-issue/index.html) (<https://www.qld.gov.au/health/staying-healthy/environmental/food/report-food-safety-issue/index.html>).

Related Content

- [Gastroenteritis](http://conditions.health.qld.gov.au/HealthCondition/condition/14/33/60/Gastroenteritis) (<http://conditions.health.qld.gov.au/HealthCondition/condition/14/33/60/Gastroenteritis>)

If you are in an emergency situation, call 000