Fact Sheet: Campylobacter

What is Campylobacter?
It is an intestinal infection caused by bacteria called *Campylobacter jejuni*. It is one of the most common causes of diarrhea in the world.

What are the symptoms?
- Diarrhea (frequently with bloody bowel movements)
- Abdominal pain
- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Fever

The symptoms usually occur 2 to 5 days after exposure and may last up to a week. Some people may be infected with the bacteria and not feel sick, but can still spread the disease to others.

How is it spread?
Campylobacter is spread through direct contact with the bacteria. You can become infected by:
- Eating food contaminated with the bacteria — most often undercooked meat and poultry
- Drinking contaminated water or unpasteurized milk
- Contact with infected pets (especially puppies and kittens), as well as farm animals

Person to person transmission is uncommon except in the case of infants and others who produce a large volume of diarrhea. People who are not treated can spread the bacteria for as long as 2-7 weeks.

How is it treated?
Most *Campylobacter* infections are mild and clear up by themselves. Generally, the only treatment is drinking extra fluids, such as water and rehydrating liquids, to replace body fluids lost due to diarrhea. Severe illness is treated with antibiotics. Take all medicines as prescribed even if you start to feel better. Follow up with your health care provider to assure that you are no longer infected.

If you are a food service worker, a healthcare worker, or a childcare worker: report your illness to your supervisor and do not work until your illness is over and your medical provider says it is OK to return to work.

How is it prevented?
- Cook all poultry products thoroughly. All poultry should be cooked to reach an internal temperature of 165 ºF.
- Do not re-use utensils used with raw meat or poultry until they are washed in hot soapy water.
- Consume only pasteurized milk and dairy products.
- Don't drink water from unsafe or unknown sources.
- Take care of pets and provide them with proper veterinary care.
- Use good hygiene and wash your hands after using the bathroom, changing a diaper, and before you eat.

This fact sheet is for information only and is not meant to be used for self -diagnosis or as a substitute for consultation with a health care provider. For more information call your health care provider or call Washtenaw County Public Health at 734-544-6700.

Visit our website at: http://publichealth.eWashtenaw.org
Or the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention at: www.cdc.gov
Washtenaw County Public Health 555 Towner Ypsilanti, MI 48198
revised 3/12