

# MISSOULA CITY-COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT DISEASE FACT SHEETS



## CAMPYLOBACTER ENTERITIS

### WHAT IS CAMPYLOBACTERIOSIS?

CAMPYLOBACTERIOSIS IS A BACTERIAL INFECTION THAT AFFECTS THE INTESTINES AND SOMETIMES THE BLOODSTREAM. ANYONE CAN GET CAMPYLOBACTER INFECTION AND MOST CASES ARE SEEN IN THE SUMMER MONTHS AND OCCUR AS SINGLE CASES. OUTBREAKS ARE UNCOMMON.

### HOW IS THE GERM SPREAD?

CAMPYLOBACTER IS GENERALLY SPREAD BY EATING INFECTED FOOD OR WATER AND, SOMETIMES, BY CONTACT WITH INFECTED PEOPLE OR ANIMALS.

### WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF CAMPYLOBACTERIOSIS?

CAMPYLOBACTERIOSIS MAY CAUSE DIARRHEA, FEVER AND SOME BLOOD IN THE STOOL.

### HOW SOON AFTER EXPOSURE DO SYMPTOMS APPEAR?

THE SYMPTOMS APPEAR TWO TO FIVE DAYS AFTER INFECTION.

### WHERE ARE THE CAMPYLOBACTER GERMS FOUND?

MANY ANIMALS INCLUDING PIGS, CATTLE, DOGS AND BIRDS, CARRY THE GERM IN THEIR INTESTINES. THESE SOURCES CAN INFECT MEAT PRODUCTS (PARTICULARLY POULTRY), WATER, MILK AND OTHER FOOD ITEMS.

### FOR HOW LONG CAN A PERSON CARRY THE CAMPYLOBACTER GERM?

INFECTED PEOPLE WILL CONTINUE TO SPREAD THE GERM IN THEIR FECES FOR A FEW DAYS TO A WEEK OR MORE. CERTAIN MEDICATIONS CAN STOP THE PERSON FROM SPREADING THE DISEASE.

### SHOULD INFECTED PEOPLE NOT GO TO SCHOOL OR WORK?

SINCE THE ORGANISM IS PASSED IN THE FECES, ONLY PEOPLE WITH ACTIVE DIARRHEA WHO ARE UNABLE TO CONTROL THEIR BOWEL HABITS (BABIES AND YOUNG CHILDREN FOR EXAMPLE) SHOULD NOT GO TO WORK OR SCHOOL. MOST INFECTED PEOPLE MAY RETURN TO WORK OR SCHOOL WHEN THEY DON'T HAVE DIARRHEA ANYMORE AND THEY MUST STILL CAREFULLY WASH THEIR HANDS AFTER TOILET VISITS. PEOPLE WHO WORK WITH FOOD, CHILDREN IN DAYCARE AND HEALTH CARE WORKERS MUST GET THE APPROVAL OF THE LOCAL OR STATE HEALTH DEPARTMENT BEFORE RETURNING TO THEIR JOBS.

### WHAT IS THE TREATMENT FOR CAMPYLOBACTERIOSIS?

MOST PEOPLE INFECTED WITH CAMPYLOBACTER WILL BECOME WELL ON THEIR OWN AND NEED TO STAY HYDRATED BY DRINKING LOTS OF WATER. MEDICATION IS USED TO TREAT SEVERE CASES. SINCE THE ILLNESS CAN OCCUR AGAIN, SOME DOCTORS MIGHT TREAT MILD CASES WITH MEDICATION TO PREVENT SYMPTOMS.

### HOW CAN CAMPYLOBACTERIOSIS BE PREVENTED?

- ALWAYS TREAT RAW FOOD AS IF IT IS INFECTED AND HANDLE CAREFULLY.
- WRAP FRESH MEATS IN PLASTIC BAGS AT THE MARKET TO PREVENT BLOOD FROM DRIPPING ON OTHER FOODS.
- REFRIGERATE FOODS RIGHT AWAY.
- WASH CUTTING BOARDS AND COUNTERS THOROUGHLY AFTER USE TO PREVENT INFECTIONS WITH OTHER FOODS.
- AVOID EATING RAW OR UNDERCOOKED MEATS, EGGS, OR MILK.
- MAKE SURE ALL FOOD IS COOKED TO THE CORRECT TEMPERATURE, ESPECIALLY WHEN USING A MICROWAVE.
- CAREFULLY WASH HANDS BEFORE AND AFTER WORKING WITH FOOD.