



Campylobacter jejuni (*C. jejuni*)

What is it?

Campylobacter gastroenteritis is a type of food poisoning caused by the bacteria *Campylobacter jejuni* and *Campylobacter coli*. Half of all reported bacterial intestinal infections in Australia are due to campylobacter infection. About one quarter of these cases is in young children aged five years or younger but all age groups can be affected.

Where is it found?

- Campylobacter are fairly common to warm-blooded animals, particularly birds.
- Humans can become infected from handling raw poultry, eating undercooked poultry, drinking contaminated, non-chlorinated water or unpasteurised milk.
- People can also become infected from handling infected animals and their faeces.

Why is it a problem?

- Campylobacteriosis, the disease caused by *Campylobacter* species, is the most common cause of foodborne disease in Australia.
- Campylobacteriosis may cause fever, nausea, vomiting, tiredness, abdominal cramping and pain and diarrhoea (often bloody). The disease usually lasts between two and ten days and is generally self-limiting.



- A small number of people may develop Guillain-Barré syndrome (GBS). This rare condition develops from two to four weeks after *Campylobacter* infection and is characterised by paralysis of the limbs.

Who is at risk?

All age groups are at risk of infection, although the disease usually occurs more frequently in children under five and young adults (15-29).

How can the risk be reduced?

- Thoroughly cook meat, especially poultry.
- Consume pasteurised milk only.
- Only drink water from approved sources.
- Maintain good hygiene in the kitchen.