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Division of Health

FACTS & details

about Sedgwick County Government

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## ***Campylobacter* Infection (Campylobacteriosis)**

### **What is campylobacteriosis?**

Campylobacteriosis is a diarrheal infection caused by the bacteria *Campylobacter*.

### **How common is campylobacteriosis?**

Campylobacter infection is one of the most common causes of diarrheal illness in the United States, affecting an estimated 1.3 million people each year.

### **How is campylobacteriosis spread?**

Campylobacter bacteria are spread by eating food or drink that has come into contact with an infected person's feces (poop). Most cases are associated with eating raw or undercooked chicken. Contact with infected animals such as puppies and kittens can spread the bacteria to people.

### **What are the symptoms of campylobacteriosis?**

Symptoms of campylobacteriosis start within two to five days after exposure and can last up to 10 days. Symptoms include diarrhea (which can be bloody), stomach pain and cramping, fever, and sometimes vomiting and nausea. Some infected people do not show any symptoms.

### **Who is at risk for campylobacteriosis?**

All age groups can be infected but many cases occur in infants and young adults. The bacteria can cause life-threatening bloodstream infections in people with weakened immune systems. Rarely, the infection can cause arthritis and Guillain-Barré syndrome which affects the nerves of the body after the diarrhea has resolved.

### **How is campylobacteriosis treated?**

Almost all people recover completely without any specific treatment. Antibiotics are recommended only for people with severe disease or those at high risk for severe disease. If antibiotics are given, the bacteria should be tested for antibiotic resistance.

### **How can I prevent campylobacteriosis?**

There is no vaccine to prevent campylobacteriosis. Prevent infection by:

- Wash hands with soap and water regularly, especially before preparing food, after handling raw meat, after contact with animals and after using the bathroom.
- Cook all chicken thoroughly. Do not eat raw or undercooked chicken.
- Use separate cutting boards for uncooked meat and other food items when preparing food to eat.
- Do not drink unpasteurized milk or untreated water.

### **What are the symptoms of campylobacteriosis in dogs?**

Infected dogs may or may not show symptoms. Symptoms can include fever, vomiting, straining to defecate (poop), not eating, and enlarged lymph nodes.

#### **For More Information:**

Contact the Sedgwick County  
Division of Health Epidemiology Program  
at 316-660-7300 or visit  
the Sedgwick County website at  
[www.sedgwickcounty.org](http://www.sedgwickcounty.org).