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## Campylobacter



### 1. What is Campylobacter?

Campylobacter are bacteria (germs) which if swallowed, multiply in the intestine and after about 2- 5 days may cause stomach upsets e.g. diarrhoea. Campylobacter remains the most common single cause of bacterial gastroenteritis in the UK and affects all age groups.

### 2. What does Campylobacter cause?

Profuse diarrhoea (often blood stained)  
High temperature (fever)  
Headache  
Abdominal pains  
Nausea or vomiting

### 3. How did I get Campylobacter?

The bacteria must be swallowed and then they reproduce in the intestine to cause illness. Infection is usually caused by under cooked meat particularly chicken. Campylobacter is also associated with un-pasteurised milk and un-chlorinated water. Many animals, puppies, kittens and birds can also be sources of infection.

### 4. How can it be prevented?

Good kitchen hygiene and thorough cooking of all foods derived from an animal source, particularly poultry and raw meat. Avoid using the same knives and chopping block for uncooked and cooked food. Ensure food is kept at the correct temperature before, during and after cooking.  
Thorough hand washing and drying is one of the most important factors in preventing the spread, particularly after visiting the toilet, before handling food, before eating and drinking and always after animal contact.

### 5. How is it treated?

Recovery usually occurs within a few days without treatment. Symptoms can last from one day to ten days and the organism is present in the faeces for an average of 2-3 weeks. The doctor may occasionally prescribe antibiotics but this will depend on the severity of the infection. The main treatment is fluid replacement.

### 6. When can I return to work / school?

Normally people should not return to work or school until 48 hours after their last symptom.