

CAMPYLOBACTERIOSIS

Also known as *Campylobacter enteritis*, campylobacteriosis is a direct zoonosis, caused by a bacterial organism which may be isolated from the intestines in both man and animals. The disease may also be isolated from healthy domestic and wild animals. It causes inflammation of the intestines which results in enteritis. The disease occurs sporadically in developed countries and more generally in undeveloped countries.



What is a zoonosis?

A zoonosis is a disease or an infection which is naturally transmissible between vertebrate animals (dogs, cats, bovines, etc) and man.



How does man become infected?

Man becomes infected

- through the ingestion of food, milk or water that are contaminated by faeces
- from close contact with the faeces of infected animals
- from one person to another. Infection of this kind is, however, rare.



Sources of the disease

Pet animals, contaminated water, milk or meat products and even contact persons may be sources of infection.

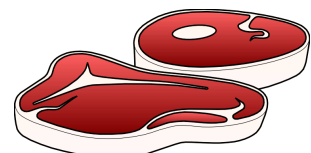


Contaminated water

The organism from the faeces of an infected animal can contaminate and survive in water for a few days or more depending on the temperature of the water.

Meat and meat products

Although the organism does not multiply in food, the most common source of infection is the unhygienic handling of meat and the ingestion of infected underdone meat or meat products.



Milk

The lactic acid in milk has an inhibitory effect on the growth of the organism. Heating (pasteurisation) the milk therefore kills and prevents the organism from multiplying.

Pet animals

Newborn puppies developing diarrhoea may transmit the infection to the owner or persons coming into contact with them. Pet animals are to a small degree responsible for infection.

Symptoms

- The disease is usually of short duration.
- The first signs appear from 2 to 10 days or more after infection.
- These include headache, backache, fever and watery to bloody diarrhoea.
- Nausea, vomiting and complications such as appendicitis may also occur.
- Recovery is spontaneous.



Prevention and control

Preventing the disease may be difficult as a result of the widespread nature of the organism. The disease is usually of short duration. However, certain precautions can be taken:

- Pasteurisation and other forms of heat processing.
- Chlorinate the water supply.
- Practise good personal hygiene.
- Cook food thoroughly.
- Take good care of pets.
- Handle meat and meat products hygienically.



For further information contact Onderstepoort Veterinary Institute,
Private Bag X5, Onderstepoort 0110
Tel: (012) 529 9111, or your local veterinarian.

2000

Compiled by Directorate Communication, National Department of Agriculture
in cooperation with
ARC-Onderstepoort Veterinary Institute

Printed and published by National Department of Agriculture
and obtainable from
Resource Centre, Directorate Communication, Private Bag X144, Pretoria 0001, South Africa

