

Campylobacter

Causing gastroenteritis-like symptoms, Campylobacter is the most common cause of food poisoning.

WHAT IS IT?

Campylobacter is a type of bacteria that is wide spread in the environment. Causing gastroenteritis-like symptoms, it is the most commonly reported type of food poisoning in Australia.

FOOD POISONING

Campylobacter food poisoning may occur after eating foods contaminated by the bacteria or from contact with animals. Raw meat and poultry, unpasteurised milk, untreated water, puppies, kittens, wild animals and birds are the main sources.

THE SYMPTOMS

Developing in two to five days, the symptoms of Campylobacter food poisoning include diarrhoea, abdominal pain, vomiting, fever and nausea.

The symptoms can range from mild to severe, with the elderly more likely to experience severe symptoms. In some patients, the diarrhoea may contain mucus and blood.

The symptoms usually end suddenly in two to five days without treatment but can take longer. If you are a food handler, notify your employer and do not return to work until the symptoms have ceased.

HOW TO AVOID FOOD POISONING

1. Wash your hands thoroughly between handling raw poultry, meats or their packaging and touching cooked or ready-to-eat foods.
2. Thoroughly cook poultry and meat. Avoid contact between cooked food and surfaces or utensils that have been used to prepare raw foods.
3. Avoid drinking untreated water or unpasteurised milk.
4. Use only a refrigerator or microwave oven to defrost foods as bacteria grow quickly at room temperature.
5. Thoroughly clean utensils, cutting boards and benches used to prepare raw foods before using them with cooked or prepared foods.
6. After touching pets or other animals, wash your hands thoroughly, especially before handling food. If your pet is sick and has diarrhoea, vomiting or similar symptoms, take it to the vet.
7. As a routine practice, clean all benches, cutting boards and utensils with detergent and follow up with a sanitiser (which kills bacteria) such as hot water (above 77oC) or a commercial chemical sanitiser.

FOOD HANDLERS

Food businesses must ensure that persons suffering from, or who they reasonably suspect is suffering from (or a carrier of) a food borne illness do not handle food where there is a reasonable likelihood of food contamination.

If a staff member has been confirmed of suffering from a food borne disease a medical practitioners clearance certificate is required prior to resuming food handling duties.

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SEE ALSO

- Food poisoning - General Information
- Food poisoning - Bacillus cereus
- Food poisoning - Clostridium botulinum
- Food poisoning - Clostridium perfringens
- Food poisoning - Escherichia coli (E.coli)
- Food poisoning - Staphylococcus
- Food poisoning - Listeria monocytogenes
- Food poisoning - Salmonella

CONTACT DETAILS

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