

# Campylobacteriosis

## Occupational Bacterial Infection from Handling Rodents

### What is Campylobacteriosis?

Campylobacteriosis is a bacterial infection generally caused by *Campylobacter jejuni* (although other species may also cause disease). It is found worldwide in a variety of mammalian species including rodents. *Campylobacter* is estimated to be the primary cause of bacterial diarrheal disease in the U.S. It is also the most commonly identified cause of Guillian-Barré syndrome.

### How does infection occur?

Disease is mainly transmitted by eating raw or undercooked poultry, other meats or unpasteurized milk. Campylobacteriosis can also be transmitted by eating another product that touched raw or undercooked meat, eating contaminated produce, or by drinking unpasteurized milk or untreated water. However infection can also be transmitted by direct contact with an infected animal.

### What are the symptoms?

Signs can start between 1 to 10 days (typically 2-5 days) after an exposure. Symptoms are usually fever, diarrhea (often bloody), abdominal pain, nausea, vomiting, sore muscles, and headaches.

### How do I prevent it?

Wash hands after handling animals and related supplies and equipment and wear gloves when working with sick animals. Don't put hands in or around your mouth after handling animals. Only eat fully cooked meats and drink only pasteurized milk and treated water.

### How is it treated?

Most cases clear within 3 to 5 days. Drinking fluids and electrolytes can help. Severe cases may need antibiotics.

### Resources used:

- The Center for Food Security and Public Health Zoonotic Disease Factsheets: Campylobacteriosis
- The Center for Food Security and Public Health Zoonotic Transmission Routes:

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- Chapter 28, Selected Zoonoses, (2015) *Lab Animal Medicine*, 3rd ed.