



# Campylobacteriosis ("Campi") as a waterborne disease

## What is "Campi"

Campylobacteriosis is a diarrhoeal disease of the gut, caused by the bacterium *Campylobacter jejuni*. It is characterised by slight to severe diarrhoea which may be bloody (dysenteric), together with abdominal cramps, fever and, in severe cases, vomiting and convulsions. Some infections may be very mild, or no symptoms at all.

## How is "Campi" transmitted?

Transmission is predominantly via the faecal-oral route. Animals, especially poultry and cattle, are an important reservoir of the bacterium. Good hygiene and cleanliness when preparing poultry for cooking is essential to prevent accidental contamination of other foods and drinks.

## How should the patient be treated?

The basis of treatment is fluid and salt replacement. If the infection is severe, specific antibiotics may be used to shorten the period of infection. Recovery can be prolonged in the case of individuals in the advanced stage of HIV infection.

## Transmission route

Waterborne

## Management option

Hygiene and sanitation/Clean drinking water

## Preventive measures

- Practice good personal hygiene
- Never eat uncooked poultry
- Always clean the cooking board and knives with soap and hot water after cutting up poultry
- Children should wash their hands thoroughly with soap and water after handling pets and before eating food
- Always wash hands after changing baby's nappies
- Do not drink untreated water
- Water can be disinfected by adding one teaspoon of domestic bleach to 20 litres of water, allowing it to stand for 1 hour before drinking. If water is cloudy (turbid) add 2 to 3 extra teaspoons of bleach.

## Interesting facts

- The most important carriers are pets, cattle and poultry, but humans also act as carriers for a week or two after the symptoms have subsided.
- Milk may on occasion be a source of infection. Do not drink un-pasteurised milk
- If a microwave is used for cooking chicken, make sure that the chicken is well cooked, or it may be a source of infection
- Infants and elderly, together with immuno-compromised people are most susceptible to the disease

Visit [www.reservoir.co.za](http://www.reservoir.co.za) for further information on water quality in your area.

