Campylobacteriosis

**What is it?**
Campylobacteriosis is an infection of the intestines caused by a bacteria called *Campylobacter*. The bacteria is commonly found in the feces of infected people and animals, and food products contaminated with the bacteria during processing or preparation.

**Symptoms**
Symptoms of the illness develop within 1 to 10 days after swallowing the bacteria, but usually between 3 to 5 days. Infected persons may have very mild symptoms or severe gastrointestinal illness.

Symptoms usually resolve within 10 days, and may include:
- Mild to severe diarrhea (may be bloody)
- Stomach cramps
- Fever (can be very high)
- Vomiting
- Convulsions (in severe cases)

**How is it spread?**
*Campylobacter* bacteria leave an infected person’s or animal’s body in the stool. If these bacteria get into a person’s mouth, the person gets sick.

People can get Campylobacteriosis when they:
- Eat contaminated food, such as chicken that has been poorly cooked, cheese made from unpasteurized milk, or fruits and vegetables that have not been properly washed.
- Drink contaminated water or unpasteurized milk
- Handle sick pets or farm animals (especially puppies and kittens with diarrhea).

**Diagnosis and Treatment**
- The disease is diagnosed from culturing a stool sample.
- Drink plenty of juices (clean water, juices and soup) to prevent dehydration (fluid loss).
- Most people get better without treatment. If the infection is severe or prolonged, an antibiotic may be prescribed.

**Prevention**
- Wash hands thoroughly after going to the bathroom, changing diapers, before preparing or eating food and after cleaning up after sick pets.
- Wash hands after handling animals or pets (and their waste) or visiting a farm.
- Drink only pasteurized milk and eat only pasteurized milk cheeses.
- Cook all meats thoroughly, particularly chicken and pork.
- Avoid cross-contamination. Make sure that other foods, such as fruit or vegetables, do not come into contact with cutting boards or knives that have been used with raw meat or poultry.
- Disinfect food-preparation surfaces and utensils after each use, as follows:
  - Use 1 tsp liquid household bleach per gallon of water
  - Do not rinse
  - Let air dry
  - Prepare the bleach solution fresh daily

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Report all cases to El Paso Department of Public Health by calling 915-212-6520