

Campylobacteriosis in Cats – Causes, Symptoms & Treatment

 www.cat-world.com.au/campylobacteriosis-in-cats.html

[About](#) [Transmission](#) [Symptoms](#) [Diagnosis](#) [Treatment](#)



About:

Campylobacteriosis is an infection caused by the *Campylobacter jejuni* bacterium. It is associated with enteritis (inflammation of the small intestine), resulting in diarrhea. Kittens, particularly those under six months of age are most susceptible to infection due to their immature immune systems. The disease is zoonotic which means it can be passed from cat to human. It is one of the leading causes of diarrhea in people. Cats only represent a small proportion of reservoirs of infection to people, undercooked meat is the most common mode of infection in humans. Young children being most vulnerable to infection.

Many cats can carry the bacteria without showing any outward signs of infection, however, they can still shed the bacteria in their feces. Due to their immature immune systems, kittens are more susceptible to developing symptoms when infected. Pound cats, stressed cats, pregnant queens, strays, and cats kept in large numbers are also at greater risk.

Transmission:

Infection is spread via the fecal-oral route, which includes:

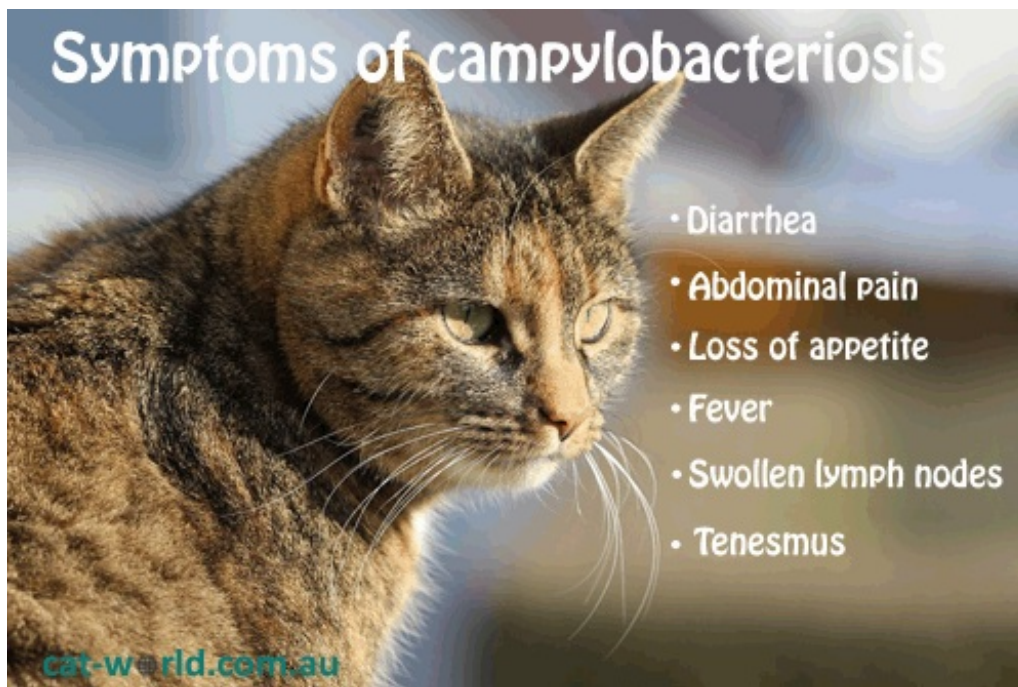
- Accidental ingestion of contaminated feces or feces particles.
- Raw meat, especially chicken, unpasteurised milk can also be a source of infection.
- Contaminated water.
- Fomites (inanimate objects) such as food bowls, litter trays and bedding.

Asymptomatic carriers can transmit the bacteria in their feces for long periods of time, infecting others.

The severity of campylobacteriosis depends on the age of the cat and the number of bacteria ingested along with the immune status of the affected cat. Kittens whose immune systems are underdeveloped and cats who are

immunosuppressed are at greatest risk.

Symptoms:



The incubation period is between 2-5 days. Most cats infected will have no symptoms or display only mild sickness. Common symptoms of campylobacteriosis include the following:

- Watery diarrhea which may contain mucus or blood
- [Abdominal pain](#)
- Tenesmus (cramping and rectal pain)
- [Loss of appetite](#)
- [Fever](#)
- Vomiting (occasionally)
- Swollen and tender lymph nodes

Symptoms are usually present for 3-7 days. Kittens with diarrhea should see veterinarian urgently as they are at risk of dehydration, which can quickly kill a small kitten.

Diagnosis:

Your veterinarian will perform a physical examination of your cat and obtain a history from you. Diagnosis is based on clinical examination along with diagnostic tests to detect the presence of the bacterium in the feces (fecal culture).

Treatment:

- Antibiotics to treat the infection.
- Fluids to replace lost fluids.
- A bland diet to rest the stomach while your cat recovers.
- Isolate the affected cats from other pets to reduce transmission.

Reducing transmission of Campylobacter in cats and humans:

While cats do have the potential to transmit the disease to humans, this is via the fecal-oral route only. Meaning humans acquire the disease via infected feces. You can not catch the disease just from petting or stroking your cat. Having said that, it is ALWAYS good practice to wash your hands frequently with hot soapy water, especially after handling cats. It is also a good idea (to avoid exposure to many other infections) to get in the habit of NOT putting your fingers in your mouth (nail biting, chewing, etc), this is a common mode of infection of many pathogens.

- Scoop out litter trays daily, wear rubber gloves when cleaning trays. Wash hands after removing rubber gloves.
- Disinfect litter trays and surrounding area at least once a week.
- Undercooked meat is the most common route of infection in people. Ensure meat is cooked through by using a meat thermometer.
- Avoid drinking unpasteurised milk.
- Wash and disinfect food and water bowls regularly. Change water at least once a day.
- Keep litter trays and food bowls away from each other.
- Wash your hands before and after handling raw meat.
- Use a separate chopping board for meat and vegetables.