What Is Campylobacter?

- Campylobacter is a type of bacteria that lives in the intestines of people, dogs, cats and many other animals, even little pets like rabbits, hamsters, ferrets and birds.
- Campylobacter can give people and animals diarrhea. Sometimes babies, very young kids and people who are already sick from something else can get very sick from Campylobacter. If this happens they may have to go to the hospital.
- The name Campylobacter means “twisted bacteria” because these bacteria are spiral-shaped.
- Sometimes an animal or a person may have Campylobacter without knowing it, and without getting sick at all.

Where Does Campylobacter Come From?

- Campylobacter comes from poop of animals (especially chickens) who already have Campylobacter in their intestine.
- Campylobacter can live for a few days in poop or on food that hasn’t been cooked well, and sometimes in water where animals have pooped.

How Do People & Pets Get Campylobacter?

- People usually get Campylobacter because a tiny amount of poop gets on their food or in their drink, or they touch something that has a very tiny amount of poop on it, and then they touch their nose, their mouth or their food and swallow the Campylobacter.
- Pets can get Campylobacter from eating or licking something that has poop on it, or from eating meat like chicken that has not been cooked well.

How Do I Know If My Pet Has Campylobacter?

- Most pets don’t get sick from Campylobacter. If they do, they get diarrhea, just like people.
- If your pet has diarrhea (really soft, runny poop), your pet might need to go to the vet.
  - Your vet can test your pet’s poop to see if there is Campylobacter in it.
  - Your vet will also check your pet to make sure there isn’t anything else making him or her sick. Your pet might need some medicine if he or she has Campylobacter.

Can I Get Campylobacter From My Pet?

*Maybe.* Campylobacter bacteria can sometimes be in poop from pets, and from people, even if they don’t look sick. But if some gets in your mouth, the Campylobacter might be able to make you sick. To make sure you don’t get sick, this is what you should do:
- Always wash your hands well after you play with your pet.
- Don’t touch anyone’s face (including yours!) or touch any food until you’ve washed your hands.
- Don’t touch your pet’s bum, even if it looks clean.
- Don’t let your pet lick your face.
- Don’t let your dog eat poop off the ground or drink from the toilet.