

Animal Surveillance Case Definition

Campylobacter Infection (Campylobacteriosis)

Clinical description

A communicable disease of animals and people caused by *Campylobacter species*, most commonly, *C. jejuni*. Cattle, poultry, swine, sheep, rodents, dogs, cats and birds can become infected with *Campylobacter*.

Canine and feline infections are often asymptomatic but clinical cases are characterized by diarrhea, with or without anorexia, fever and vomiting. The usual interval between exposure and onset of illness ranges from 2 to 5 days. Generally, younger animals are more seriously affected than older animals. *Campylobacter* infections in dogs and cats are more common in animal shelters and kennels than in private homes. Human infections are usually caused by contaminated food, unpasteurized milk/milk products, and water. In rare instances the infection has been acquired directly from pets with diarrhea, usually puppies and kittens. Untreated animals may shed the organism indefinitely.

Case classification

Confirmed

+/- compatible clinical signs **and**

- isolation of *Campylobacter* from a clinical specimen by culture.

Most veterinary diagnostic laboratories can culture *Campylobacter*, but it is recommended to contact the laboratory for specific instructions. Microaerophilic culturing is required, and the laboratory may recommend special transport media to enhance culture viability.

Probable

A clinically compatible case **and**

- Gram-negative gull-wing shaped slender rods observed by examination of a fresh fecal smear. Since non-pathogenic species of *Campylobacter* appear identical on microscopic examination, culture of fresh fecal sample is necessary for species identification and definitive diagnosis.

Instruction for performing a fecal smear: Insert moistened cotton swab 3-4 cm into rectum of the sick animal. Roll gently on slide and allow to air dry. Stain with diffquick. Examine under high power magnification. The presence of neutrophils suggest bacterial infection and gull-wing shaped slender rods suggest *Campylobacter species*. Assorted spirochetes can also look like gull-wing forms.

Suspect

- A clinically compatible case that is epidemiologically linked to a confirmed case.