

Environmental Assessment— Campylobacter Jejuni



Campylobacter (Campy) can survive and remain viable in food, water and the environment for days under non-optimal conditions. Campy is the most common cause of bacterial foodborne illness in humans. Food is the most frequently implicated vehicle, with raw poultry as the primary source of infection. Campy can survive when food is improperly handled, undercooked, or cross-contaminated. Campy is also found in unpasteurized milk and cheese and contaminated water.

Some key items to focus on while investigating a suspected campy outbreak:

- **Interview and observe**—Interview management and employees regarding their food preparation practices of suspect food. Observe the preparation and cooking process of the suspect food from start to finish, including the monitoring of internal cooking temperatures. Ask about cleaning and sanitizing of food contact surfaces used to handle suspect food item and observe practices.
- **Review food flows and menu**—Determine the potential for cross-contamination hazards of suspect food item and verify the source of the food item.
- **Review employee health**—Ask if there have been any recent reports of illness among employees, as employees may have eaten the same food items and become ill.
- **Verify and discuss**—Cooking, cooling, reheating and temperature holding practices of suspect food.
- **Review hand hygiene**—Note any issues with handwashing and bare hand contact with ready-to-eat foods.
- **Provide corrective actions**—Discuss and correct improper food safety practices while onsite.
- **Collect samples**—Find out whether any suspect food item remain at the establishment. If yes, set it aside and do not serve it. Notify the Indiana Department of Health and discuss if sampling would be appropriate. If yes, the Food Protection Division may assist with the coordination, collection and transport of food samples.

When investigating campylobacter outbreaks at a food establishment, focus on food handling practices of suspect food items including improper cooking, cross contamination and improper hand hygiene of food handlers.

Indiana is a voluntary participant with the CDC's National Environmental Assessment Reporting System (NEARS). Please visit the CDC's [NEARS](#) website for more information. Please contact the Indiana Department of Health Food Protection Division Rapid Response Team for assistance with the environmental assessment and completing NEARS forms, sampling supplies and any other questions regarding the environmental response for a campylobacter outbreak.

For assistance, please contact:

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