

***Campylobacter* Enteritis**

Campylobacter is one of the most common causes of food borne diseases in the United States, causing approximately 2 million cases of gastroenteritis each year. Most illnesses associated with *Campylobacter* infection are sporadic. Common source outbreaks occur, and most have been traced to unpasteurized milk and contaminated drinking water. In comparison, most sporadic cases, are associated with improper handling and preparing of poultry. *Campylobacter* has been found in up to 88% of broiler chicken carcasses in the United States. The infectious dose of *Campylobacter* is low; ingestion of only 500 organisms can result in human illness. Therefore, contamination of food by raw chicken is an efficient mechanism for transmission of this organism. Culture of stool using a specialized medium and culture condition with subsequent biochemical testing, are the common methods used to isolate and identify *Campylobacter jejuni*. Stools and/or suspected isolates may be submitted to the NPHL to detect or confirm *Campylobacter*.

*[Condensed from an article which appeared in the **Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report**; February 27 1998/Vol.47/No.7]*