

PENNY SAVER NEWS

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Most summer camps are things to look forward to, different games, different friends, different foods. But there is one 'camp' that shows up often in the summer that is definitely to be avoided. This bad guy is *Campylobacter*, or 'campy' for short.

Although more people have heard of *Salmonella*, a lot of food safety experts think that *Campy* is just as common. That's not nice!

Campylobacter infections happen much more often in the summer than other seasons. *Campy* likes to attack small children and young people more than adults. It makes men sick more often than it does women. It can take as few as 500 of this bacteria to make a person sick.

One of the reasons why *Campylobacter* is not diagnosed as often is that it usually hits one person at a time. Instead of making dozens or hundreds sick at once the way *Salmonella* usually does, *Campy* mostly occurs in just one or two people. Then it moves on, disappears, and no one connects all the dots. They are not recognized as all one outbreak.

Another reason *Campylobacter* is frequently not recognized is that the symptoms often go away by themselves in a couple of days. The symptoms can include diarrhea, cramps, fever and abdominal pain. Occasionally the infection will get into the blood stream or nervous system and cause much more serious problems. And sometimes the diarrhea is so bad that it takes a week or two to get over it. Some people will need

antibiotics to fully recover, and a few might even die.

Where does this thing come from? *Campy* likes to live on animals. It grows easily on chickens, birds and cows without making them sick. But if we bring a package of contaminated chicken or ground beef home, now it can get on other food.

Sometimes small children get sick just by riding in a grocery cart and touching a package of fresh chicken in the cart. Often what happens is that some juice from raw chicken or beef splashes onto the counter, the apron, the sink or other place in the kitchen. If other food touches the same place, now the bacteria will grow on it.

There are just a few simple tricks to keep *Campy* out of your life. First, keep things clean. When you open a package of fresh meat, put it directly into the pan to cook. Washing chicken doesn't remove many bacteria, but does give them lots of chances to splash around the kitchen. Just put the meat directly onto the heat!

After you've handled fresh meat, wash your hands. Use warm soapy water and scrub for at least 20 seconds. Wash the counter, the sink, and anything else in the area where a bit of juice might have splashed.

Next, cook the meat. Heat will kill the bacteria. Use a thermometer to be sure the meat is done. Cook chicken and poultry until the temperature inside the thickest piece is at least 165° F. Cook ground beef until the thermometer reads 160° F in the center. Do not think that you can tell by looking if the meat is cooked enough! It's a myth that when chicken juices run clear the meat is hot enough. It's a myth that hamburger must be brown to be done! Sometimes pink hamburger is hot enough. Sometimes clear juices are still dangerous. Use a thermometer! It won't lie.

And, never drink or give to children raw, unpasteurized milk. Raw milk might

have come from cows that had the bacteria. Almost half the cases of *Campy* poisoning in the 1990's came from drinking raw milk. Pasteurization is the way to kill them before they do any damage.

The next time you decide grill some chicken on the patio marinate it in lime juice and black pepper with a bit of olive oil. Grill, or broil, it until it reaches 165° F inside the thickest part of the breast or thigh. While it's cooking mix up this cool yogurt sauce, and warm some whole wheat pita breads. All you'll need is a big green salad to finish the meal.

Minty Yogurt Sauce for Grilled Chicken

½ cup plain, fat free yogurt

1 Tbsp minced fresh mint

1 Tbsp minced fresh cilantro

½ tsp ground cumin

Combine all ingredients in small bowl and refrigerate to let flavors blend. Drizzle over the cooked chicken on the pita breads. Garnish with fresh lime wedges. Enough for 4.

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