

MEDIA RELEASE

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Increase of campylobacteriosis cases in Nelson Marlborough

There has been an increase in campylobacteriosis case notifications in the last four weeks in the Nelson Marlborough region.

24 cases have been notified to the Medical Officer of Health in the past four weeks, compared to a range of 6-16 cases in the same period over the previous five years.

Nelson Marlborough Health is working with the Ministry for Primary Industries, the Ministry of Health and the Institute of Environmental Science and Research to try and identify the reasons for the increase.

A number of known risk factors for campylobacteriosis have been identified in the people affected. These are: drinking raw (unpasteurised) milk or untreated water, and contact with animals and/or nappies.

A single source cause has yet to be found and investigations are ongoing.

About campylobacteriosis

Campylobacteriosis is a common water and food-borne gastro-intestinal disease caused by bacteria passed on in the faeces of infected birds, animals and humans. People who are immunocompromised, elderly or very young are at higher risk of severe disease, which rarely can be fatal. Campylobacteriosis can be contracted through:

- consuming raw milk
- consuming uncooked poultry
- consuming untreated drinking water
- contact with infected pets and farm animals
- contact with nappies of infected infants

Information about symptoms and medical treatment can be read here:

<https://www.healthnavigator.org.nz/health-a-z/c/campylobacter/>

Food safety advice

MPI's tips for food safety: <http://www.mpi.govt.nz/food-safety/food-safety-for-consumers/tips-for-food-safety/>

Ministry of Health advice on boiling untreated water to make it safe to drink:

<https://www.health.govt.nz/your-health/healthy-living/drinking-water/water-contamination-events>

About raw milk and campylobacter

Nelson Marlborough Medical Officer of Health Dr Stephen Bridgman advises people against drinking raw milk and says that raw milk is a risky food for anyone to consume, but the following people are especially at risk of severe illness:

- young children and babies
- older people
- pregnant women
- people with a weakened immune system.

Dr Bridgman encourages people who have decided not to follow health advice and to drink raw milk, to follow the MPI guidance about reducing their risk of becoming ill: <http://www.mpi.govt.nz/food-safety/food-safety-for-consumers/is-it-safe-to-eat/raw-milk>

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