MULTISTATE OUTBREAKS LINKED TO CONTACT WITH PUPPIES

Campylobacter Infections

Physicians in multiple states, including Tennessee, have seen human cases of multidrug-resistant *Campylobacter* infections that have been linked to contact with puppies. Regardless of where they come from, any puppy or dog can carry, get sick from, and shed *Campylobacter*. The same is true for certain other pets, including kittens and cats, ferrets, rodents, and other small mammals.

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) offers the following guidance on advising clients of how to avoid getting sick from their puppies or dogs.

Talk to pet owners about taking simple steps like:

- Washing hands thoroughly with running water and soap for at least 20 seconds every time they touch dogs, dogs' food, or clean up after dogs.
- Pick up and dispose of dog feces, especially in areas where children might play (use disposable gloves and wash hands thoroughly afterward).
- Immediately clean up any urine, stool, or vomit indoors, and disinfect the area (use disposable gloves and wash hands thoroughly afterward).
- Don't let pets lick mouths, faces, open wounds, or areas with broken skin.
- Take your dog to the veterinarian for regular health checkups and help prevent the spread of disease.

Testing dogs for *Campylobacter* infection

- Dogs under 12 months of age or any puppy or dog adopted from crowded environments or from pet stores that are showing signs of *Campylobacter* infection, including bloody mucoid diarrhea, should receive a gram-stained fecal smear to identify *Campylobacter*-like organisms.
- Laboratory confirmation of *Campylobacter* infection can be made from a fecal sample transported in Cary-Blair medium, or a quantitative-PCR from a fresh stool sample, in consultation with a veterinary diagnostic lab (the UTCVM Bacteriology Lab provides this service – see **vetmed.tennessee.edu/vmc/dls/Bacteriology** for more information).
- Puppies and dogs with *Campylobacter* infection should be isolated to prevent the spread of infection. *Campylobacter* infections are often self-limiting and supportive care is frequently the only treatment needed.
- If *Campylobacter* infection is confirmed with laboratory testing and the puppy or dog has hemorrhagic diarrhea, or a fever, and antibiotic treatment is warranted, the choice of antibiotic should be guided by culture and sensitivity results. The antibiotic resistance profile for this outbreak includes the commonly used antibiotics (e.g., fluoroquinolones, macrolides). Because *Campylobacter jejuni* has inherent antibiotic resistance to other commonly prescribed oral antibiotics (e.g., penicillins, cephalosporins, trimethoprim-sulfamethoxazole), infections with the outbreak strain may be difficult to treat with oral antibiotics.

Environmental Sanitation

- Thoroughly clean with water and detergent any surfaces and equipment that have been in contact with stool from any dog suspected to have a *Campylobacter* infection to remove any organic material. An EPA-registered disinfectant should then be used, according to label instructions, to disinfect the surface or equipment.
- For additional information on proper disinfection procedures, visit **www.nasphv.org/Documents/VeterinaryStandardPrecautions.pdf**

For more information, visit the CDC's outbreak information page at: **www.cdc.gov/campylobacter/outbreaks/puppies-9-17/index.html**

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