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Woodward Reservoir Update 4 p.m.

Stanislaus County - We have a final update on the situation involving Woodward Reservoir. The San Joaquin Department of Public Health was not able to determine the source of the Campylobacter infection of the man stating the lake caused his infection. Also, test results of the water in the lake received today show the Total Coliform bacteria count is significantly down since the busy Memorial Day holiday, below the threshold level where we would ordinarily post notices of high bacteria content. E.Coli counts continue to remain low as well in the test results.

“We greatly value all of our customers who come to our County reservoirs and parks and they have been extremely supportive through this,” stated Jami Aggers, the Director of Parks and Recreation for Stanislaus County. “The statement that the water was the cause of the illness and that the reservoir should be shut down - even before a Public Health investigation occurred - was very emotionally charged and difficult for us. We knew the probability of the water being the cause of the infection was medically unlikely. However, we were prepared to take action if public health professionals felt there was a problem because safety is a top priority for us. Woodward Reservoir continues to be a beautiful place to visit and have fun and we look forward to our customers continuing to enjoy it.”

More detail is presented below:

1. For the case of Campylobacter where the family stated the water at Woodward Reservoir was the cause of infection, the San Joaquin Department of Public Health concluded their investigation and stated they cannot determine a source of the infection. This is not surprising, as it is sometimes difficult to isolate the source.

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2. According to the Centers for Disease Control, Campylobacter is one of the most common causes of diarrheal illness in the United States with an estimated 1.3 million infections per year. According to the California Department of Public Health (CDPH), an estimated **200,000 Californians are infected each year**. Symptoms usually begin two to five days after exposure to Campylobacter and last about a week.
3. **Campylobacteriosis is most commonly associated with eating raw or undercooked poultry.** Chickens are frequently infected with Campylobacter although they may not show symptoms. **Past studies have shown that over half of the raw chicken meat sold in the United States contains Campylobacter.** Cross-contamination with Campylobacter can sometimes occur when raw poultry is sliced on a cutting board, and the unwashed board or knife is then used to prepare vegetables or other lightly cooked foods. (source CDPH)
4. In addition to poultry, other animals can also be infected by Campylobacter. Outbreaks of Campylobacteriosis have occurred when people drink surface or stream water that has been contaminated by infected birds or cows. Additionally, people have become ill from drinking or eating products made with unpasteurized milk from infected cows. People have also become ill after direct exposure to the feces of an infected dog or cat. (source CDPH)
5. **Separate from the person who contracted Campylobacter,** was the fact that water testing for Total Coliform bacteria was high in the lake when tested around Memorial Day. **This bacteria is *not* associated with Campylobacter. These are two separate issues.** Because bacteria was high, but not at a level to merit closure of the lake, courtesy notices were posted in various places to let people know. Those notices were not legally required and were done as a service to our customers.
6. Out of an abundance of caution, this water was re-tested and results were received today showing the bacteria counts are significantly down since the busy Memorial Day time period and the notices of high bacteria counts are no longer appropriate.
7. **There will always be bacteria present in natural bodies of water** whether it's Woodward Reservoir, a canal, a pond, a lake or other surface water source. Bacteria counts will go up and down over time.
8. Lakes, rivers and canals are not self-contained, filtered and chemically treated like a swimming pool. The benefit in swimming in natural bodies of water is being out in the beauty of nature; but, you are also swimming in what nature puts into the water from human and animal sources.

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9. Because the water is not filtered and chemically treated, some people with sensitivities might have skin reactions, such as rashes, when they expose their skin to untreated water. Also, because naturally occurring bacteria exist, there is always the chance of becoming ill as a result of ingesting the water.
10. **There is always a risk associated in swimming in water that is not filtered or chemically treated.** While the risk might be lower or higher based on bacteria content or other variables such as a person's immune system, there is always a risk. Please note, even swimming pool water can have a risk factor for disease if ingested. (source CDC)

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CAMPYLOBACTERIOSIS FACT SHEET

What is campylobacteriosis?

Campylobacteriosis is an illness caused by a bacteria called *Campylobacter*. *Campylobacter* is one of the most common types of bacteria causing diarrhea in the United States. Approximately 2.4 million people (nearly one percent of the U.S population) are infected by *Campylobacter* each year, with an estimated 200,000 people infected each year in California.

How do people get campylobacteriosis?

Eating food contaminated with *Campylobacter* can result in illness. Campylobacteriosis is most commonly associated with eating raw or undercooked poultry. Chickens are frequently infected with *Campylobacter* although they may not show symptoms. Past studies have shown that over half of the raw chicken meat sold in the United States contains *Campylobacter*. Cross-contamination with *Campylobacter* can sometimes occur when raw poultry is sliced on a cutting board, and the unwashed board or knife is then used to prepare vegetables or other lightly cooked foods.

In addition to poultry, other animals can also be infected by *Campylobacter*. Outbreaks of campylobacteriosis have occurred when people drink surface or stream water that has been contaminated by infected birds or cows. Additionally, people have become ill from drinking or eating products made with unpasteurized milk from infected cows. People have also become ill after direct exposure to the feces of infected dog or cat.

Person-to-person spread of *Campylobacter* is uncommon, but can occur. This means that *Campylobacter* can also be spread through direct or indirect contact with an infected person's feces. For example, this can occur if an infected person prepares food for other people without washing their hands thoroughly after using the toilet. Person-to-person spread can also occur in child care and other institutional settings if people do not wash their hands well. Transmission can also occur through certain types of sexual contact (e.g., oral-anal contact).

What are the symptoms of campylobacteriosis?

The illness is usually mild, and some people with *Campylobacter* have no symptoms at all. Symptoms of campylobacteriosis may include diarrhea, abdominal cramps, and fever. The diarrhea may be bloody, and may be accompanied by nausea and vomiting. In some persons with weakened immune systems, it can cause a serious, life-threatening infection. Symptoms usually begin two to five days after exposure to *Campylobacter* and lasts about a week. Most people with campylobacteriosis recover completely. However, a small percentage of people may have joint pain and swelling after infection. In addition, a rare disease called Guillain-Barre syndrome that causes weakness and paralysis can occur several weeks after the initial illness.

How is campylobacteriosis diagnosed?

The diagnosis is usually made when a laboratory finds *Campylobacter* in the feces of an infected person. Uncommonly, *Campylobacter* may be found in other clinical samples, such as blood.

How is campylobacteriosis treated?

Most people with campylobacteriosis recover fully without any antibiotics. It is important to drink enough fluids to prevent dehydration. People with diarrhea (especially children in day care or people who handle food) should not go to school, day care or work until the diarrhea ends, to prevent spreading campylobacteriosis to other people.

What can a person do to prevent campylobacteriosis?

- Thoroughly cook all meats, especially poultry. Poultry should be cooked to reach a minimum internal temperature of 165°F. If you are served undercooked poultry in a restaurant, send it back for further cooking.
- Wash hands before preparing food and immediately after handling any raw poultry or meat.
- Avoid cross-contamination by carefully cleaning all cutting boards, countertops, and utensils with soap and hot water after preparing raw poultry or meat and prevent juices from raw meats from dripping on other foods. Make sure that other foods, such as fruits or vegetables, do not come into contact with cutting boards or knives that have been used with raw poultry or meat.
- Always refrigerate meat products. Never leave raw meat at room temperature.
- Avoid unpasteurized milk and soft cheeses and untreated (not chlorinated or boiled) surface or stream water.
- Wash hands well with soap and water after using the bathroom, changing diapers, or handling pets, including animals at petting zoos. Make sure children wash their hands well after going to the bathroom or handling pets.

What is public health doing about campylobacteriosis?

The California Department of Public Health (CDPH) and local health departments monitor campylobacteriosis in California. Because campylobacteriosis is a disease that can be spread to other people, health care providers are required by law to report cases of campylobacteriosis to the local health department. Public health agencies, including the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the U.S. Department of Agriculture, are making an effort to educate the public about safe food handling practices, which is the best way of preventing campylobacteriosis.

In addition, if many cases occur at the same time, it may mean that a restaurant, food, or water supply has a problem that requires intervention by the health department. CDPH can assist local health departments to investigate outbreaks of illness, find the source(s) of contamination, and devise control measures.

Where can I get more information on campylobacteriosis?

- You can get more information on campylobacteriosis from your health care provider, your local health department, and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website:

<http://www.cdc.gov/nczved/divisions/dfbmd/diseases/campylobacter/>

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