



## *E. coli* O15:H7

*Escherichia coli* O157:H7 (*E. coli* O157) can cause a bacterial infection of the intestines.

### If you think your child has *E. coli* O157:

- Tell your childcare provider or call the school.
- **Keep your child home from childcare** until 24 hours after diarrhea has stopped and your child has tested negative for *E. coli* O157. Stools must test negative two times, with at least 24 hours between samples.
- School aged children do not need to stay home unless they are not feeling well and/or have diarrhea and need to use the bathroom frequently.
- Anyone with *E. coli* should not go in lakes, pools, splash pads, water parks, or hot tubs until 2 weeks after diarrhea has stopped.
- For more information, call Hennepin County HSPHD-Epidemiology at 612-543-5230 or your local health department.

## Parent/Guardian information

### Symptoms

Your child may have watery or bloody diarrhea, stomach cramps, and fever. Illness may last up to 12 days.

If your child is infected, it may take 1 to 10 days for symptoms to start.

### Spread

- By eating or drinking contaminated beverages or food (raw or undercooked meat).
- By touching hands, objects, or surfaces contaminated with stool.
- By handling infected pets or farm animals.

### Contagious period

The illness can spread as long as *E. coli* O157 bacteria are in the stool. This could be for a few weeks or in a small number of children, up to 3 months.

### Call your health care provider

- If anyone in your home has symptoms. There is a medical test to detect the bacteria.
- Diarrhea caused by *E. coli* usually goes away after a few days without treatment. Antibiotics and treatments to stop diarrhea are usually not recommended.

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## Prevention

- Wash hands after using the toilet and changing diapers. Wash hands before preparing food or eating. Your child may need help with handwashing.
- Farm animals (especially cattle and calves) can cause *E. coli* O157. Wash hands after touching pets and farm animals.
- Clean and disinfect any objects that come in contact with stool. This includes toilets, potty chairs, sinks, toys, and diaper changing areas. Use a product that kills germs.
- Avoid swallowing water when in lakes, pools, splash pads, water parks, or hot tubs.
- Cook food thoroughly and do not drink unpasteurized milk or unpasteurized juice. Always disinfect cooking surfaces, especially after handling or cutting raw meat.

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