

Wednesday, 17 October 2012

Health Protection



E. coli O157

Introduction
Enterohemorrhagic *E. coli* (EHEC) is a particular strain of the bacteria, *E. coli*, which can cause severe disease in humans. EHEC O157 is the most common strain, although there are other strains (generally referred to as *E. coli* O157).

The illness
EHEC O157 can cause a range of symptoms from mild diarrhoea to severe illness. In some cases, it can lead to kidney failure, haemolytic uremic syndrome (HUS) and death. EHEC O157 is most commonly associated with undercooked ground beef, but it can also be found in other foods such as raw milk, soft cheese, and fermented sausage. In the most severe cases, it can cause kidney failure and death. EHEC O157 is usually found in young children and in the most severe cases, it can cause kidney failure and death. EHEC O157 is usually found in young children and in the most severe cases, it can cause kidney failure and death. EHEC O157 is usually found in young children and in the most severe cases, it can cause kidney failure and death.

The incubation period
The incubation period can range from 1-14 days, and is most commonly 3-4 days. Symptoms usually occur within one week, except in cases of HUS or TSS. The illness is usually self-limiting and resolves on its own within a few days and usually lasting from 5 to 10 days, but in some cases, it can last for several weeks. There is no specific treatment and each phase of the illness is treated separately. Antibiotics are not given and may increase the risk of complications such as HUS.

The source
The main source is the gut of healthy cattle, although it may be present in sheep and other animals. It can spread to humans in a number of ways:
• Eating undercooked, ground beef (especially minced meat such as in beef burgers)
• Drinking raw milk, usually from locally raised cows such as in local dairies
• Consuming soft cheese, fermented sausage, soft cheese, such as unpasteurised soft cheese, and other dairy products
• Contact with animal manure, such as in farms, petting zoos, open farms or public farms
• Drinking or swimming in untreated water (especially in areas where there is raw water, stream water or untreated surface water)
• Contact with raw milk or other raw milk products (such as cream)

The organism is very easily passed from one person to another. This leads to secondary spread, which is the most common route. It is also possible to get the illness from other animals, but this is rare. It is also possible to get the illness from other animals, but this is rare. It is also possible to get the illness from other animals, but this is rare. It is also possible to get the illness from other animals, but this is rare.



This factsheet for health professionals contains information on *E. coli* O157, a strain of bacteria that can cause severe disease in humans.

Information on prevention is included.

Details

- Format
- 2 page A4 factsheet
- Target group
- Health professionals

Downloads

Attachment	Size
Professional EColi Factsheet 10 12 0.pdf	513.96 KB

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