

Wednesday, 17 October 2012

Health Protection



E. coli O157

Introduction
Enterohemorrhagic *E. coli* (EHEC) is a particular strain of the bacteria, *E. coli*, which causes 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 severe cases, it can lead to kidney failure, haemolytic uremic syndrome (HUS) and death. It is particularly dangerous for young children and the elderly. In the majority of cases, symptoms start within 3-5 days of infection. In the majority of cases, symptoms start within 3-5 days of infection. In the majority of cases, symptoms start within 3-5 days of infection.

The incubation period can range from 1-14 days, and is most commonly 3-4 days. Symptoms usually start within one week, except in cases of HUS or TSS. The illness is usually self-limiting and lasts for 5-10 days, but can be longer. Some cases are fatal. 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 beef, especially minced meat such as in beef burgers.
• Drinking untreated surface water.
• Contact with untreated surface water in farms, sports centres, swimming pools or public toilets.
• Contact with untreated surface water in public places such as swimming pools or public toilets.
• Drinking or swimming in untreated water (especially in areas where there is a risk of contamination from cattle or sheep).
• Contact with untreated surface water in public places such as swimming pools or public toilets.

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 important to avoid contact with untreated surface water, especially in public places such as swimming pools or public toilets. It is also important to avoid contact with untreated surface water in public places such as swimming pools or public toilets.



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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