

# E. COLI PARENT FACT SHEET

## PARENT/GUARDIAN

Your child may have been exposed to: E. coli O157:H7

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

CMV (cytomegalovirus) is a common virus that infects most people, but rarely causes illness.

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.

## 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 8 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.

## 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.

**For more information, please contact your local health department.**

[Carson City Health & Human Services](#) (Carson City, Douglas, Lyon Counties) 775-434-1690 & 775-887-2190 (after hours)

[Central Nevada Health District](#) (Churchill, Mineral, Eureka, Pershing Counties) 775-866-7535

[Northern Nevada Public Health](#) (Washoe County) 775-328-2447 (24 hours)

[Southern Nevada Health District](#) (Clark County) 775-759-1300 (24 hours)

[Division of Public and Behavioral Health](#) (All other Counties) 775-400-0333 (24 hours)

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