

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.

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

- Tell your childcare provider or call the school.
- **Need to stay home?**

Childcare:

Yes, until your child has tested negative for *E. coli* O157. Stools must test negative two times, with at least 24 hours between collection of the first and second stool sample.

School:

No, unless the child is not feeling well and/or has diarrhea and needs to use the bathroom frequently

Symptoms

Your child may have watery or bloody diarrhea, stomach cramps, and fever. Illness may last for 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 food or beverages.
- By touching contaminated hands, surfaces, or objects.
- By handling pets and 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, this may be for 3 months.

Call your Healthcare Provider

- ◆ If anyone in your home has symptoms. There is a medical test to detect the bacteria. Diarrhea caused by *E. coli* O157 usually goes away after a few days without any treatment. Treatments to stop diarrhea are usually not recommended.
- ◆ Ask how to prevent dehydration. Your child may lose a lot of water due to vomiting and diarrhea.

Prevention

- Wash hands after using the toilet and changing diapers and before preparing food or eating. Your child may need help with handwashing.
- 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.
- Farm animals (especially cattle and calves) can cause *E. coli* O157. Wash your hands after touching pets and farm animals.
- Cook food thoroughly and do not drink unpasteurized milk or unpasteurized juice. Always disinfect cooking surfaces.
- Anyone with *E. coli* O157 should not use swimming beaches, pools, water parks, spas, or hot tubs until 2 weeks after the diarrhea has stopped.

For more information, call Hennepin County HSPHD-Epidemiology at 612-543-5230 or call your local health department.

Prepared by Hennepin County Human Services and Public Health Department (HSPHD)