

WHAT IS E.COLI O157?



E.coli O157 is a form of food poisoning caused by a particularly virulent type of Escherichia coli bacteria which typically results in diarrhoea.

How did I get it ?

From any of the following sources:

- From handling raw meat especially beefs
- From eating undercooked meat or poultry or other contaminated food product
- Consuming untreated milk or dairy products.
- Swimming in or drinking un-chlorinated water
- From direct contact with animals particularly on farms or in animal sanctuaries
- From close contact with another infected person

When did I get it ?

The illness usually occurs within 3 - 8 days of infection, but 3 - 4 days is normal.

What are the signs and symptoms ?

- Diarrhoea with bloody stools.
- Headaches, nausea, and vomiting.
- Symptoms normally persist for about a week
- For the very young, old or those already unwell, E.coli O157 may be more severe and complications such as renal failure can occur.

How do I stop it spreading ?

- Wash hands thoroughly after going to the toilet and before preparing meals or eating.
- Young children with the infection should have their hands washed for them or be supervised.
- Disinfect all areas in the toilet daily (including door handles).
- Infected persons should stay away from work until vomiting and diarrhoea have ceased.
- If the infected person is a food handler, works as a health carer / nurse or is a child attending school or a nursery etc. further advice should be obtained.
- Read the accompanying leaflet for further guidance.

Where can I get more advice ?

- Your own General Medical Practitioner or a health specialist will be able to advise upon individual patient health care.
- You should inform your place of work or in the case of children, the head teacher of the school to find out if exclusion is necessary and when you can return.
- The investigating officer will also provide you with a more general leaflet on infection control and may be contacted on the number below for further advice if it is required.

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