

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.

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.

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

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.

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.