

VTEC are a group of bacteria which cause illness in humans. The most important VTEC strain to cause illness in the UK is *E. coli* O157. Symptoms can range from mild gastroenteritis to severe bloody diarrhoea, mostly without fever, through to two serious conditions known as haemolytic uraemic syndrome (HUS) and thrombotic thrombocytopenic purpura (TTP) that affect the blood, kidneys and in severe cases the central nervous system.



People can become infected by:

- Eating contaminated food
- Contact with infected animals either directly or through inadvertent contact with animal faeces (e.g. at farms, petting farms and campsites);
- Contact with other people who have the illness (i.e. through inadequate hand hygiene after using the toilet and/or before food handling);
- Drinking water from inadequately treated water supplies;
- Swimming or playing in contaminated water such as ponds or streams.

For further information on *E. coli* see:

[E. coli Public Information Factsheet](#)

[E coli Professional Information Factsheet](#)

The PHA advises that everyone follows some simple rules to prevent the spread of *E. coli* - not just those with symptoms, but everyone should wash their hands after using the toilet and before eating or preparing food. Raw and cooked food should be kept completely separate, raw meat should be cooked through and vegetables and fruit should be washed thoroughly before eating.

**For further information for patients and visitors on preventing food poisoning:**

<http://www.publichealth.hscni.net/publications/preventing-food-poisoning-home-and-healthcare-settings-0>

## **Latest figures for Belfast 2012 outbreak**

As of 3pm on Monday 05 November 2012, there were 137 confirmed cases and 164 probable cases. The next update is due on Monday 5 November.

### **News Releases**

[E. coli O157 Update - 07 November](#)

[E. coli O157 Update - 31 October](#)

[E. coli O157 Update - 26 October](#)

[E. coli O157 Update - 24 October](#)

[E. coli O157 Update - 23 October](#)

[E. coli O157 Update - 22 October](#)

[E. coli O157 Update - 21 October](#)

[E. coli O157 Update - 20 October](#)

[E. coli O157 Update - 19 October](#)

[E. coli O157 Update - 18 October](#)

[E. coli O157 Update - 17 October](#)

[E. coli O157 Update \(afternoon\) - 16 October](#)

[E. coli O157 Update \(morning\) - 16 October](#)

[E. coli O157 Update - 15 October](#)

[E. coli O157 news release - 13 October](#)

### **PHA publishes E. coli report**

Please see the news release (29 April 2015) [here](#).

[Print](#)