

Wednesday, 17 October 2012

Health Protection



***E. coli* O157**

Introduction
Enterohemorrhagic *E. coli* (EHEC) are common, normal, harmless bacteria in the human large intestine. However, some EHEC strains produce a toxin called Verotoxin (VT) which can cause severe disease in humans. VT is the most common type, although there are other strains that cause disease but are not classified as EHEC.

The illness
EHEC O157 can cause a range of symptoms from mild diarrhoea to severe kidney failure. Symptoms usually appear 3-5 days after infection. EHEC O157 is a rare cause of illness in humans, but it is responsible for many cases of kidney failure in children and adults. It is also responsible for many cases of kidney failure in cattle and sheep. EHEC O157 is a rare cause of illness in humans, but it is responsible for many cases of kidney failure in children and adults. It is also responsible for many cases of kidney failure in cattle and sheep.

The incubation period can range from 1-14 days, and is most commonly 3-8 days. Symptoms usually appear 3-5 days after infection. EHEC O157 is a rare cause of illness in humans, but it is responsible for many cases of kidney failure in children and adults. It is also responsible for many cases of kidney failure in cattle and sheep.

The source
The main source is the gut of healthy cattle, although it may be present in sheep and other animals. It can spread to humans in a number of ways:
• Eating untreated fresh, undercooked minced meat such as in beef burgers.
• Drinking untreated milk and cheese. However, it is also associated with other foods, such as unwashed vegetables and salads, due to cross contamination.
• Contact with infected animals, such as at farms, petting centres, zoos, fairs or public houses.
• Drinking or swimming in untreated water (especially in rural areas) such as river water, stream water or water from wells.
• Contact with raw milk which has not been pasteurised properly.

The organism is very rarely passed from one person to another. This leads to 'sporadic' cases, where the infected person has been exposed to the organism in one of the ways described above, but from whom there is no direct contact. This can lead to outbreaks involving much more widespread transmission, such as through contaminated food, often after the infected person has been treated, and is particularly common in households, nurseries and school canteens.



This factsheet for health professionals contains information on *E. coli* O157, a strain of bacteria that can cause severe disease in humans.

Information on prevention is included.

Details

Format

2 page A4 factsheet

Target group

Health professionals

Downloads

Attachment

Size

[Professional EColi Factsheet 10 12 0.pdf](#) 513.96 KB

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