



# E. COLI 0157

## What is E.COLI 0157?

E.coli 0157 is a form of food poisoning caused by a particularly virulent type of Escherichia coli bacteria which typically results in diarrhoea.



## When did I get it?

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

## How did I get it?

From any of the following sources:

- From handling raw meats especially beef.
- 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, secondary cases within households can occur very easily through contact with contaminated articles such as nappies, toilets.



## 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 0157 may be more severe and complications such as renal failure can occur. The organism is excreted for about one week, although longer has been observed in children. It is not unusual for people without symptoms to excrete the organism.

## How do I stop it spreading?

- While you are ill and have symptoms you are infectious. You can return to work or school once you have been free from diarrhoea for 48 hours.
- You should tell your employer you have had Ecoli 0157 infection if you work with vulnerable groups such as the elderly, the young, those in poor health, or handle food.
- Wash hands thoroughly after going to the toilet and before preparing meals or eating.
- Supervise young children who are infected with hand washing.

- Disinfect all areas in the toilet daily (including door handles, other contact areas).

### How can I prevent contracting E.COLI 0157?

- Cook all meat products especially thoroughly. Make sure that the meat is cooked throughout (no longer pink), any juices run clear, and the inside is hot (165oF or 75oC for 30 seconds).
- If you are served undercooked minced beef or burgers in a restaurant, send it back for further cooking.
- Wash hands with soap after handling raw foods of animal origin and before touching anything else.
- Prevent cross-contamination in the kitchen by
  - Use separate cutting boards for foods of animal origin and other foods. Carefully clean all cutting boards and utensils used to prepare poultry, meat and fish
  - Avoid consuming unpasteurised milk and untreated surface water
  - Make sure that persons with diarrhoea, especially children, wash their hands carefully and frequently with soap to reduce the risk of spreading the infection.



### Prevention from contact with animals

- wash hands thoroughly after handling all animals
- Do not eat food during visits to see animals unless hands have been thoroughly washed.
- only eat food in designated animal-free areas
- thoroughly wash footwear after visiting these places
- Wash hands with soap after having contact with pet faeces.



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