

E. coli hospitalizes several families who have attended events at State Fairgrounds

OKLAHOMA CITY - Several Oklahoma families have been hospitalized with E. coli contamination after attending the same event at the State Fairgrounds. While some cases are minor, some are more severe, putting one 8-year-old in ICU.

The last place Connor Sneary thought he'd be after the Oklahoma Youth Expo is the hospital. Connor is on dialysis, has received several blood transfusions and is breathing with the help of a ventilator. His mother, Ashlee, had a minor case of contamination that put her in the hospital for just a few days.

But they aren't the only ones.

Cousin Allison Schultz says, Connor is surrounded by several families at children's with the same illness, who all attended the same youth expo. "We just kind of want some answers to know where it came from," says Schultz. "That way it can be stopped."

The state health department's Lauri Smithee says the possibilities are endless. "At this time we are not able to definitively say we have a contaminated this or that, or stall or barn or food vendor," says Smithee. "These particular organisms are really only found in the intestinal tract of ruminant animals, which are cows, sheep, goats and perhaps deer."

It could also be found in contaminated foods. So they're investigating everything from the livestock to the food trucks. Smithee says the agricultural community is more aware of the dangers of E. coli than most, but says that doesn't mean they're exempt.

Showing is something close to Connor's heart— Schultz says she hopes this doesn't discourage him. "Connor is a very strong kid," says Schultz. "I think and I'm very hopeful that he will come out of this and still be the same Connor we all know and love."

The health department urges anyone who has attended events on the State Fairgrounds since the Oklahoma Youth Expo to not ignore any flu-like symptoms, like vomiting and diarrhea without a fever.

SOURCE: <http://kfor.com/2014/04/02/e-coli-hospitalizes-several-families-who-have-attended-events-at-state-fairgrounds/>