

Southwest Utah Public Health Department

NEWS RELEASES

Monday, July 3, 2017

E.coli Illness Outbreak

ST. GEORGE, UT - The Southwest Utah Public Health Department (SWUPHD) has confirmed six cases of E.coli (Escherichia coli) in the Hildale/Colorado City area on the Utah/Arizona border. The most serious cases involve children, and include two deaths. There is an ongoing investigation being carried out by health personnel and the source of this outbreak has not yet been determined. The outbreak appears to be confined to a limited area of Hildale and risk to the larger community is not considered to be significant at this time.

"E.coli is a bacteria known to cause diarrheal illness," says Dr. David Blodgett, SWUPHD Health Officer. "Certain types of E.coli are more concerning than others. Some of the cases in this outbreak have been identified as the O157H7 strain, characterized by bloody diarrhea and serious complications. Our thoughts and sympathies are with the families who have been affected".

The disease-causing types of E. coli are usually spread to humans when tiny amounts of human or animal feces gets in the mouth. These particles can come from unwashed hands, contaminated water or food, and animal exposure.

The general symptoms of E.coli can include stomach cramps, diarrhea (often bloody), vomiting, and fever (usually 101 F or lower). Bloody diarrhea is a symptom characteristic of the strain involved in the outbreak. Symptoms will appear between one and ten days after exposure. Most people will recover within five to seven days after becoming ill.

People can help prevent E.coli infection by thorough hand washing after animal exposure, using the restroom, changing diapers, and before and after food preparation. Practice proper food preparation by keeping raw meat separate from other foods, cooking meat to safe temperatures (usually 165 degrees F), and refrigerating foods that

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can spoil within two hours. Do not drink raw milk or unpurified water from streams, ponds, or lakes.

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People who have these symptoms should contact their healthcare provider. More information and updates will be available on the SWUPHD website (www.swuhealth.org/ecoli) and the SWUPHD Facebook page ([swuhealth](https://www.facebook.com/swuhealth)).

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The mission of the Southwest Utah Public Health Department is to protect the community's health through the promotion of wellness and the prevention of disease. Visit our website at www.swuhealth.org

Posted by SWUHEALTH at 4:49 PM

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