

E. coli Outbreak - Latest Updates

Updates on the E. coli outbreak that was declared in Calgary September 4, 2023.

September 18, 2023

Update on E. coli outbreak case numbers and childcare site closures

CALGARY - As of September 18, there are a total of 348 lab-confirmed cases connected to this outbreak, an increase of six from Saturday.

There has been a total of 27 lab-confirmed secondary cases, an increase of four since Saturday. No additional secondary cases have been confirmed in the past 24 hours. Some secondary transmission is common and expected in significant outbreaks such as this.

There are currently nine patients receiving care in hospital, down from 12 on Saturday. All these patients have been confirmed as having hemolytic uremic syndrome (HUS), including three on dialysis (a decrease of three since Saturday).

Patients with more severe illness are in stable condition and responding to treatment. Our frontline healthcare teams continue to provide them with the very best care and support possible.

As hospital admission and daily numbers of new cases continue to decline, we are seeing clear indications that the outbreak related to the initial exposure has peaked.

A total of 642 children connected have been cleared to return to a daycare facility.

There are currently seven daycare facilities under closure and partial closure orders issued September 15 and 16, by Alberta Health Services (AHS) Environmental Public Health.

These closures include:

- Active Start Country Hills: Dolphin and Starfish preschool classes.
- CanCare Childcare - Scenic Acres location: Busy Bees, Bumble Bees and Butterflies classrooms.
- CEFA Early Learning Calgary South: JK 3-1 classroom.
- Renert Junior Kindergarten: all four Junior K classrooms.
- Vik Academy: this site was part of the original closures, and Classrooms 3 and 4 are again closed as a precaution pending testing results.
- 1st Class Childcare Shawnessy, "Main daycare" area is being closed.

Additionally:

- While MTC Daycare site is not being closed, affected children and staff in Promenade and McKenzie classrooms are being notified that they are excluded from attending all childcare facilities until they test negative for E. coli and remain symptom free.

- Calgary JCC Child Care was issued a closure order for its infant and toddler rooms on September 15.

All closure orders are posted to the AHS website [Calgary Zone | Alberta Health Services](#).

Initial results suggest these cases affecting additional daycare facilities are mostly cases of secondary transmission. Either these new cases were in contact with children from the original daycare or children from the original daycares were in contact with the facility. Two cases are not yet connected, and AHS is further investigating.

E. coli is a highly transmissible bacteria that can be spread by food or water sources, or by hand to mouth contact.

Communication with Parents:

Families are being notified directly of how and where to take their children for testing if they have symptoms. If children are experiencing more severe symptoms, such as bloody diarrhea, they should be taken to an emergency department immediately.

Parents and staff from all the daycare facilities involved are being provided with information about what to do if they experience symptoms, test positive, or have concerns about the health and safety of their child.

To ensure the safety of others and to reduce transmission, young children (those not 5 years or older by Dec 31, 2023) and staff from facilities and/or classrooms that were issued closure orders who have had no gastrointestinal symptoms must test negative for STEC (E. coli) before they can attend any childcare facility. Children who attended the impacted daycares and had symptoms must provide at least one negative stool sample 48 hours after symptom resolution (diapered children will need to provide two, 24 hours apart).

AHS will only provide those children and staff with clearance to return to daycare once they have reviewed those negative tests. Health Link or Environmental Public Health will inform parents of completed lab results, confirm they remain asymptomatic, and then issue them with clearance letters when appropriate.

It is crucial for parents who have children who attend these daycares follow the guidance being given to them by healthcare professionals. If your daycare is closed, please respect why this is done and keep your children at home. Only send your child to another facility if they have received clearance from AHS and remain symptom free.

For more information on this outbreak, please visit www.ahs.ca/ecoli.

September 16, 2023

Update on E. coli outbreak case numbers and childcare site closures

As of September 16, there are a total of 342 lab-confirmed cases connected to this outbreak. This includes 23 lab confirmed cases resulting from secondary transmission. While case numbers continue to increase as additional test results come back from the lab, the number of patients in hospital is falling.

There are currently 12 patients receiving care in hospital. Of those patients, 10 have been confirmed as having severe illness/hemolytic uremic syndrome (HUS), including 6 on dialysis.

Those patients with more severe illness are in stable condition and responding to treatment. Our frontline healthcare teams continue to provide them with the very best care and support possible.

Cumulatively, 37 children and one adult have been hospitalized.

A total of 26 patients have been discharged from hospital since the beginning of this outbreak.

A total of 593 children connected with this outbreak have been cleared to return to a daycare facility.

Staff and parents of children attending the following daycare and childcare facilities are being contacted today following partial closures affecting several additional facilities.

The closures are:

- Active Start Country Hills: Dolphin and Starfish preschool classes
- CanCare Childcare - Scenic Acres location: Busy Bees, Bumble Bees and Butterflies classrooms
- CEFA Early Learning Calgary South: JK 3-1 classroom
- Renert Junior Kindergarten: all 4 Junior K classrooms
- Vik Academy: this site was part of the original closures, and Classrooms 3 and 4 are again closed as a precaution pending testing results.

Additionally:

- While MTC Daycare site is not being closed, affected children and staff in Promenade and McKenzie classrooms are being notified that they are excluded from attending all childcare facilities until they test negative for E. coli and remain symptom free.
- Calgary JCC Child Care was issued a closure order for its infant and toddler rooms on September 15.

All closure orders are posted on the AHS website as they are finalized.

Initial results suggest these cases affecting additional daycares are mostly cases of secondary transmission. Either these new cases were in contact with children from the original daycare or children from the original daycares were in contact with the facility. One case is not yet connected and AHS is further investigating.

Families are being notified directly of how and where to take their children for testing if they have symptoms. If children are experiencing more severe symptoms, such as bloody diarrhea, they should be taken to an emergency department immediately.

Parents and staff from all the daycare facilities involved are being provided with information about what to do if they experience symptoms, test positive, or have concerns about the health and safety of their child.

E. coli is a highly transmissible bacteria that can be spread by food or water sources, or by hand to mouth contact. Secondary transmission is not unusual in significant outbreaks such as this.

To ensure the safety of others and to reduce transmission, young children (those not 5 years or older by Dec 31, 2023) and staff from facilities and/or classrooms that were issued closure orders who have had no gastrointestinal symptoms must test negative for STEC (E. coli) before they can attend any childcare facility. Children who attended the impacted daycares and had symptoms must provide at least one negative stool sample 48 hours after symptom resolution (diapered children will need to provide two, 24 hours apart).

AHS will only provide those children and staff with clearance to return to daycare once they have reviewed those negative tests. Health Link or Environmental Public Health will inform parents of completed lab results, confirm they remain asymptomatic and then issue them with clearance letters when appropriate.

It is crucial for parents who have children who attend these daycares follow the guidance being given to them by healthcare professionals. If your daycare is closed, please respect why this is done and keep your children at home. Only send your child to another facility if they have received clearance from AHS and remain symptom free.

The centralized kitchen that supplied food to the impacted daycare facilities remains closed indefinitely. All issues related to the outbreak are still under investigation. There is no definitive timeline to reopen.

For more information on this outbreak, please visit www.ahs.ca/ecoli.

September 15, 2023

AHS has issued a closure order to an additional daycare in Calgary and is following up with families after a child tested positive for Shiga toxin producing (STEC) E. coli.

The child was not in attendance at any of the daycares involved in the outbreak to date.

AHS is in contact with the family to further investigate to determine if this is linked to the Fueling Brains outbreak. Further review will look to confirm if there is a connection.

AHS is communicating directly with families of this new daycare, Calgary JCC Child Care, informing them that a case of STEC E.coli in their daycare is being investigated and provide them with guidance on monitoring for symptoms and direction on seeking clinical care and testing for those with symptoms.

The daycare facility has been closed out of caution. Further information is being provided directly to affected families.

September 14, 2023

For the second consecutive day, the number of children in hospital with severe illness is declining.

As of this morning, September 14th, there were a total of 329 lab-confirmed cases connected to this outbreak. While case numbers continue to increase as test results come back from the lab, the number of patients in hospital is falling.

There are currently 13 patients receiving care in hospital, all of whom are children. Eight children have been discharged since yesterday and are now recovering at home.

A total of 20 patients have now been discharged from hospital since the beginning of this outbreak (19 children, one adult).

There are 11 patients confirmed as having hemolytic uremic syndrome (HUS), including six patients receiving dialysis. Eight patients have recovered from HUS since yesterday, and one patient no longer requires dialysis.

Those patients with more severe illness are in stable condition and responding to treatment. Our frontline healthcare teams continue to provide them with the very best care and support possible.

There are 22 secondary transmissions, and all are within households linked to the outbreak.

The centralized kitchen that supplied food to the impacted daycares remains closed until further notice.

For more information on this outbreak, please visit www.ahs.ca/ecoli.

September 13, 2023

Media Availability - September 13, 2023.

September 12, 2023

Government of Alberta News Release - A detailed investigation is currently underway to determine the source of the contamination, which is believed to be a food source from the central kitchen used by the daycares. [Read More](#)

September 11, 2023

As of this morning, September 11th, we have a total of 231 lab-confirmed cases connected to this outbreak.

There are currently 26 patients receiving care in hospital. 25 children and 1 adult are hospitalized. Additionally, 11 patients have been discharged from hospital since the beginning of this outbreak.

21 patients have been confirmed as having severe illness/hemolytic uremic syndrome (HUS). They are stable and receiving the appropriate care in hospital.

Based on the epidemiology of the cases we've seen to date, it is highly likely the source of this outbreak is food that was distributed from the central kitchen. At this point, AHS has not been able to identify a food item that was the source. We continue to investigate.

It is important to note that the majority of individuals who get sick from *E. coli* generally improve on their own and without specific treatment within 10 days, but a small proportion may develop more severe complications.

We continue to keep affected families informed and equipped with guidance on which symptoms to monitor for, testing, and next steps. Parents should visit www.ahs.ca/ecoli for further information.

Alberta Children's Hospital has established a dedicated clinic to monitor symptomatic patients after their initial emergency department visit, as well as for patients who have been discharged from hospital. Follow up clinics have also been established at South Health Campus and Peter Lougheed Centre for these patients.

If you are concerned about yourself or your children starting to develop symptoms, please call Health Link at 8-1-1. If children develop symptoms, including bloody diarrhea, please visit the Emergency Department. If your child is not symptomatic, please do not take them to hospital. If you have concerns or questions, call Health Link at 8-1-1 or get in touch with your family physician and they will give you the advice and support you need.

September 10, 2023

As of this morning, September 10th, we have a total of 190 lab-confirmed cases connected to this outbreak.

There are currently 27 patients receiving care in hospital. Additionally, 7 patients have been discharged from hospital since the beginning of this outbreak.

20 patients have been confirmed as having severe illness/hemolytic uremic syndrome (HUS). They are stable and receiving the appropriate care in hospital.

Based on the epidemiology of the cases we've seen to date, it is highly likely the source of this outbreak is food that was distributed from the central kitchen. At this point, AHS has not been able to identify a food item that was the source. We continue to investigate.

It is important to note that the majority of individuals who get sick from E. coli generally improve on their own and without specific treatment within 10 days, but a small proportion may develop more severe complications.

We continue to keep affected families informed and equipped with guidance on which symptoms to monitor for, testing, and next steps. Parents should visit www.ahs.ca/ecoli for further information.

Alberta Children's Hospital has established a dedicated clinic to monitor symptomatic patients after their initial emergency department visit, as well as for patients who have been discharged from hospital. Follow up clinics have also been established at South Health Campus and Peter Lougheed Centre for these patients.

If you are concerned about yourself or your children starting to develop symptoms, please call Health Link at 8-1-1. If children develop symptoms, including bloody diarrhea, please visit the Emergency Department.

If your child is not symptomatic, please do not take them to hospital. If you have concerns or questions, call Health Link at 8-1-1 or get in touch with your family physician and they will give you the advice and support you need.

There are currently 11 facilities which have been issued closure orders.

Four of the 11 facilities have not had anyone who has tested positive for STEC (E. coli). They include Fueling Brains Bridgeland, Little Oak Early Education, Almond Branch, and Braineer Academy.

AHS is rescinding the closure orders for those four facilities effective September 11, as long as no one from the site tests positive for STEC (E. coli) before this time. Any decisions on site reopening after the closure orders are lifted are made by the operator. Staff and children from these four facilities do not need stool testing to return if they have had no gastrointestinal symptoms and have not been told otherwise by AHS.

Public Health Inspectors have assessed the readiness of these four facilities to reopen and ensured that they have taken appropriate measures such as cleaning and disinfection.

Some people from the other seven facilities have tested positive for STEC (E. coli). Young children (those not 5 years or older by Dec 31, 2023) and staff from these seven facilities who have had NO gastrointestinal symptoms must test negative for STEC (E. coli) before they can attend ANY childcare facility to ensure the safety of others.

The closure orders for the remaining seven facilities will be rescinded September 12th. Young children (those not 5 years or older by Dec 31, 2023) and staff will require clearance from health officials for the safety of all at the childcare facility.

AHS Public Health staff have started to contact individuals directly to discuss test results and discuss any new symptoms. Verbal and written rescind notices will be provided as they are confirmed. We appreciate your patience as we carefully work through this process. Individuals will be updated directly. Please do not call AHS or Health Link for results.

The central kitchen that provides food services for these daycares remains closed at this time.

September 9, 2023

As of this morning, September 9th, we have a total of 164 lab-confirmed cases connected to this outbreak.

There are currently 27 patients receiving care in hospital. Additionally, 6 patients have been discharged from hospital since the beginning of this outbreak.

19 patients have been confirmed as having severe illness/hemolytic uremic syndrome (HUS). They are stable and receiving the appropriate care in hospital.

Based on the epidemiology of the cases we've seen to date, it is highly likely the source of this outbreak is food that was distributed from the central kitchen. At this point, AHS has collected food samples for testing and awaiting results. At this time AHS has not been able to identify with certainty the exact food item that was the source. We continue to investigate.

It is important to note that the majority of individuals who get sick from E. coli generally improve on their own and without specific treatment within 10 days, but a small proportion may develop more severe complications.

We continue to keep affected families informed and equipped with guidance on which symptoms to monitor for, testing, and next steps. Parents should visit www.ahs.ca/ecoli for further information.

Alberta Children's Hospital has established a dedicated clinic to monitor symptomatic patients after their initial emergency department visit, as well as for patients who have been discharged from hospital.

If you are concerned about yourself or your children starting to develop symptoms, please call Health Link at 8-1-1. If children develop symptoms, including bloody diarrhea, please visit the Emergency Department.

If your child is not symptomatic, please do not take them to hospital. If you have concerns or questions, call Health Link at 8-1-1 or get in touch with your family physician and they will give you the advice and support you need.

September 8, 2023

Media Availability - September 8, 2023.

September 7, 2023

As of this morning (September 7), we have a total of 128 lab-confirmed cases connected to this outbreak.

There are currently 25 patients receiving care in hospital (20 at Alberta Children's Hospital and 5 at Peter Lougheed Centre). Additionally, three patients have been discharged from hospital.

Alberta Children's Hospital is well-equipped to handle this situation, and AHS is supporting the site with resources from elsewhere in the zone. As needed, additional inpatient beds are available at the Peter Lougheed Hospital and some patients are being looked after at that site.

Nine patients have been confirmed as having hemolytic uremic syndrome. They are stable and receiving the appropriate care in hospital.

AHS is also aware of three patients linked to the daycares that are receiving care outside of Alberta.

It is important to note that the majority of individuals who get sick from E. coli generally improve on their own and without specific treatment within 10 days, but a small proportion may develop more severe complications.

Our staff has been working with the operators of the 11 facilities which have been issued Closure Orders by our public health inspectors. These sites will remain closed until AHS determines it is safe for them to re-open.

We continue to keep affected families informed and equipped with guidance on which symptoms to monitor for, and next steps. Parents should visit www.ahs.ca/ecoli for further information.

Alberta Children's Hospital has established a dedicated clinic to monitor symptomatic patients after their initial emergency department visit, as well as for patients who have been discharged from hospital.

If you are concerned about yourself or your children starting to develop symptoms, please call Health Link at 8-1-1. If children develop symptoms, including bloody diarrhea, please visit the Emergency Department.

If your child is not symptomatic, please don't take them to hospital. If you have concerns or questions, call Health Link or get in touch with your family physician and they will give you the advice and support you need.

September 6, 2023

Media Availability - September 6, 2023.

September 5, 2023

An E. coli outbreak has been declared for six locations of a Calgary daycare and five additional sites that share a central kitchen. All eleven daycare sites in the Calgary area have been issued a closure order until issues are resolved.

At this time, 56 lab-confirmed cases have been linked to the outbreak, as well as 15 individuals hospitalized, and up to 50 children presenting to hospital.

Families with children attending any of the above locations have been sent letters advising of the outbreak and are being asked to monitor for symptoms.

If you are concerned about yourself or your children starting to develop symptoms, please call Health Link at 8-1-1. If children develop severe symptoms (e.g. bloody diarrhea), please visit the Emergency Department.

We continue to keep affected families informed and equipped with guidance on which symptoms to monitor for, and next steps.

AHS will continue to update the public with information as it becomes available.

Background

E. coli is a type of bacterial infection that is most commonly caused by eating contaminated food.

The predominant symptom associated with E. coli is diarrhea, which may be bloody. Symptoms usually start one to 10 days after eating food contaminated with the E. coli bacteria.

The majority of individuals who get sick from E. coli generally improve on their own and without specific treatment within 10 days, but a proportion may develop more severe complications. Antibiotics are not necessary or helpful for this infection.

Children, the elderly and the immunocompromised are at greater risk of complications from this strain of E. coli.