

Latest E. coli Updates

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ADH Provides Update on E. coli Outbreak

The E. coli outbreak in Northwest Arkansas seems to be past its peak with no new symptom onset reported since Aug. 25.

The ADH confirmed in an update with the university Thursday that 42 individuals have been identified as part of the outbreak out of more than 3,200 surveyed. Of that number, 37 are probable cases based on reported E. coli symptoms while five cases have been confirmed with positive tests. The number of individuals impacted may change as the ADH continues to investigate. Original estimates of the number of individuals who may have impacted were reduced after those with similar symptoms but no link to the outbreak were sorted out from those with true E. coli symptoms.

The ADH also revised its case count of those hospitalized, confirming that a total of four individuals have been hospitalized during the outbreak. Two of those individuals remain hospitalized while two have been discharged. A previous hospitalization has been ruled out as being part of the outbreak.

The Arkansas Department of Health's investigation does not point to a clear food source at this time, but the ADH continues to await food sample test results. ADH has confirmed it has no reason to believe the outbreak is connected to the university's public dining facilities.

Based on what is known about the onset of E. coli-related symptoms, the outbreak appears to have started approximately two weeks ago. Symptoms usually start 3 to 4 days after ingesting the bacteria.

Because the bacteria is also transmissible, it is important to practice proper hygiene, especially good handwashing, at all times, on and off campus. The university has increased its surface cleaning and sanitizing protocols to help mitigate the spread.

In addition, practice other general E. coli prevention practices including cooking meats thoroughly; washing fruits and vegetables well under water; avoiding cross contamination; avoiding raw milk, unpasteurized dairy products, and unpasteurized juices; and following the four steps to food safety when preparing food: clean, separate, cook, chill.

Severe E. coli Symptoms Require Medical Attention

Seek medical attention right away if you have any severe E. coli symptoms, including:

- Diarrhea and fever higher than 102°F
 - Diarrhea for more than 3 days that is not improving
 - Bloody diarrhea
 - So much vomiting that you cannot keep liquids down
 - Signs of dehydration, such as decreased urination, dry mouth and throat, dizziness when standing up
 - Practice proper hygiene, especially good handwashing.
1. coli are a diverse group of bacteria that normally live in the intestines of humans and animals. Although most strains of these bacteria are harmless, some produce toxins that can make you sick, such as Shiga toxin-producing E. coli (STEC). Most people infected with Shiga toxin-producing E. coli experience severe stomach cramps, diarrhea (often bloody), and vomiting. Symptoms usually start 3 to 4 days after swallowing the bacteria. While most recover quickly, some people may develop a type of kidney failure (hemolytic uremic syndrome, also called HUS) and would need to be hospitalized. Antibiotics are not recommended for patients with suspected E. coli infections until diagnostic testing can be performed and E. coli infection is ruled out.

Current information and any additional updates about the outbreak will be added to the [Latest E. coli Updates](#) online resource provided by Pat Walker Health Center.