

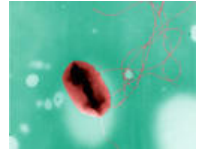
E. coli

E. coli is the name of a type of bacteria that lives in your intestines and in the intestines of animals. Although most types of *E. coli* are harmless, some types can make you sick.

The worst type of *E. coli*, known as *E. coli* O157:H7, causes bloody diarrhea and can sometimes cause kidney failure and even death. *E. coli* O157:H7 makes a toxin called Shiga toxin and is known as a Shiga toxin-producing *E. coli* (STEC).

There are many other types of STEC, and some can make you just as sick as *E. coli* O157:H7.

One severe complication associated with *E. coli* infection is hemolytic uremic syndrome (HUS). The infection produces toxic substances that destroy red blood cells, causing kidney injury. HUS can require intensive care, kidney dialysis, and transfusions.



Sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Contaminated food, especially undercooked ground beef, unpasteurized (raw) milk and juice, soft cheeses made from raw milk, and raw fruits and vegetables (such as sprouts)Contaminated water, including drinking untreated water and swimming in contaminated waterAnimals and their environment: particularly cows, sheep, and goats. If you don't wash your hands carefully after touching an animal or its environment, you could get an <i>E. coli</i> infectionFeces of infected people
Incubation Period	1-10 days
Symptoms	Severe diarrhea that is often bloody, severe abdominal pain, and vomiting. Usually, little or no fever is present. Symptoms of HUS include decreased urine production, dark or tea-colored urine, and facial pallor.
Duration of Illness	5-10 days. Most people will be better in 6-8 days. If HUS develops, it usually occurs after about 1 week.
What Do I Do?	Drink plenty of fluids and get rest. If you cannot drink enough fluids to prevent dehydration or if your symptoms are severe (including blood in your stools or severe abdominal pain), call your doctor. Antibiotics should not be used to treat this infection.
How Can I Prevent It?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Avoid eating high-risk foods, especially undercooked ground beef, unpasteurized milk or juice, soft cheeses made from unpasteurized milk, or alfalfa sprouts.Use a food thermometer to make sure that ground beef has reached a safe internal temperature of 160° F.Wash hands before preparing food, after diapering infants, and after contact with cows, sheep, or goats, their food or treats, or their living environment .

General Information

[E. coli Infections](#) (NIH MedlinePlus)

Trusted health information on causes, symptoms, treatment, and prevention.

[E. coli](#) (CDC)

General information plus details on previous outbreaks.

[E. coli Outbreak Investigations](#) (CDC)

Outbreak investigations from October 2006 to the present.

[Escherichia coli O157:H7](#) (USDA)

General information plus directives and notices, compliance guidelines, data collection and reports, and more.

***E. coli* and Ground Beef**

[Focus on Ground Beef](#) (USDA)

Includes concerns about *E. coli*.

***E. coli* and Raw Cookie Dough**

[FDA Continues to Warn Against Eating Raw Dough for Cookies or Other Raw Dough Products Before Cooking](#) (FDA)

Reminds consumers about the risks of eating raw cookie dough.

[Multistate Outbreak of *E. coli* O157:H7 Infections Linked to Eating Raw Refrigerated, Prepackaged Cookie Dough](#) (CDC)

A summary of the investigation into the 2009 outbreak.

[FDA Warns Consumers Not to Eat Nestle Toll House Prepackaged, Refrigerated Cookie Dough](#) (FDA)

Includes information for consumers on the risks of eating raw cookie dough.

[E. coli Outbreak and Raw Cookie Dough](#) (CDC)

Information about the June 2009 *E. coli* outbreak related to raw cookie dough (2:36 minutes)