

E. coli (Escherichia coli)



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# Symptoms

Symptoms of Shiga toxin-producing *E. coli* (STEC) infection vary for each person, but often include severe stomach cramps, diarrhea (often bloody), and vomiting. Some people may have a fever, which usually is not very high (less than 101°F/38.5°C). Most people get better within 5 to 7 days. Some infections are very mild, but others are severe or even life-threatening.

Most people with a STEC infection start feeling sick 3 to 4 days after eating or drinking something that contains the bacteria. However, illnesses can start anywhere from 1 to 10 days after exposure. **Contact your healthcare provider** if you have diarrhea that lasts for more than 3 days or diarrhea that is accompanied by a fever higher than 102°F, bloody diarrhea, or so much vomiting that you cannot keep liquids down and you pass very little urine.

## Hemolytic Uremic Syndrome (HUS)

About 5 to 10% of people who are diagnosed with STEC infection develop a potentially life-threatening complication known as hemolytic uremic syndrome (HUS). HUS develops about 7 days after symptoms first appear, when diarrhea is improving. Clues that someone is developing HUS include decreased frequency of urination, feeling very tired, and losing pink color in cheeks and inside the lower eyelids. People with HUS should be hospitalized because their kidneys may stop working and they may develop other serious problems. Most people with HUS recover within a few weeks, but some suffer permanent damage or die.

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