

E. Coli Infections

Cause: E.coli is a gastrointestinal infection that is caused by eating food that has been contaminated with fecal material.

Symptoms: The symptoms of E. coli infections vary for each person but often include severe stomach cramps, diarrhea (sometimes bloody), and vomiting. Fever might be present but is not a prominent sign. Generally a person can develop symptoms within 2-10 days of exposure but usually within 3-4 days. Most people get better within 5 to 7 days. Some infections are very mild, but others are severe and even life-threatening.

Persons with signs and symptoms described above should consult their physician. People infected with E. coli O157 should rest and drink plenty of fluids to reduce fatigue and dehydration.

Preventive measures: Always wash hands after using the bathroom, having contact with farm animals or farm equipment, and before eating or preparing food. Persons that care for others that have symptoms should be sure to wash their hands with soap and water after going to the bathroom, disposal of soiled diapers and human/animal waste. Only drink pasteurized milk and dairy products and fruit juices. Wash fruits and vegetables carefully, particularly if eaten raw. Raw vegetables be peeled.

For more information please contact your physician or call the Halifax County Health Department at 252-583-5021 and ask for the infection control nurse.

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