



Gila County
Health & Emergency Management

Prevent. Promote. Protect.

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***E. coli* Fact Sheet**

Background

E. coli are a family of bacteria that normally live in the intestines of humans and animals without causing illness. One type, *E. coli* 0157:H7, produces a toxin that can cause severe illness.



Symptoms

The most common symptoms are diarrhea and severe stomach cramps. Symptoms usually begin 3 to 4 days after exposure and last for one week. Around 5% of persons with *E. coli* will develop a severe complication called hemolytic uremic syndrome (HUS). Some people with *E. coli* have no symptoms, but can still pass the bacteria to others.

Transmission

E. coli is spread by eating contaminated food or drinking water, such as:

- Undercooked ground beef
- Fruits and vegetables that are not washed
- Unpasteurized apple juice or cider
- Unpasteurized milk or milk products
- Untreated drinking water

Treatment

If you have *E. coli*, drink lots of fluid and rest. People with mild symptoms usually recover without specific treatment. Antibiotics are not helpful and may increase

the chances of developing HUS. Seek medical care if you do not recover in a week or if you develop severe fatigue or decreased urination.

Prevention

To prevent *E. coli*:

- Cook all meat thoroughly. Ground beef should be cooked to 160° F
- Keep raw meat separate from ready-to-eat foods
- Never place cooked meat on a surface that held raw meat
- Use separate cutting boards for meat products and other foods
- Wash fruits and vegetables before eating
- Wash hands with soap after handling raw meat
- Wash your hands frequently with soap and water, especially after going to the bathroom, after changing diapers, and before preparing foods or beverages
- Do not consume unpasteurized milk or juice
- Do not drink untreated water from rivers



For more information

If you need more information, please contact your primary care physician or Gila County Division of Health & Emergency Management at (928) 402-8811.