

# SHIGA-TOXIN PRODUCING E.COLI (STEC) FACT SHEET

## What is Shiga-toxin producing E.coli (STEC)?

E. coli are bacteria that normally live in the intestines of humans and animals. There are many strains of E. coli bacteria, and most of them are harmless. However, some kinds of E. coli cause illness by making a toxin. STEC is a highly infectious form that produces a toxin called Shiga.

## What are the symptoms?

Symptoms may include:

- Vomiting
- Watery or bloody diarrhea
- Stomach cramps
- Fever

**Symptoms can appear from 2 to 10 days after exposure, usually for 3 to 4 days.**

## How can it be prevented?

- Wash hands thoroughly with warm, soapy water after using the bathroom, changing diapers, and before and during preparation of food.
- Cook ground beef to a temperature of at least 160° F.
- **NEVER** put cooked hamburgers or meat on the plate they were on before cooking.
- Wash **ALL** fruit and vegetables well.
- Refrigerate uneaten cooked foods immediately to prevent bacterial growth.
- Drink only pasteurized milk, juice, or cider.
- Avoid swallowing water from swimming pools, lakes, ponds, or streams.

## How is it spread?

- By eating raw or undercooked beef
- By drinking contaminated water or eating contaminated food (ex. lettuce, spinach, or unpasteurized milk, juice, or cider)
- By improper hand washing after using the bathroom, changing diapers, or before and during preparation of food

## How is it treated?

- Antibiotics should not be used.
- Those with diarrhea should drink plenty of fluids to prevent dehydration.
- **Do not return to work until cleared by a health care provider.**
- Hospitalization may be required on rare occasions.

More information: <https://www.cdc.gov/ecoli>

This FACT SHEET is for information only and is not meant to be used for self-diagnosis or as a substitute for consultation with a healthcare provider. For more information call your healthcare provider.

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