

Shiga toxin-producing Escherichia coli (STEC)

WHAT IS SHIGA TOXIN-PRODUCING *E. COLI*?

STEC is a type of bacteria commonly found in the intestines of animals. When humans come into contact with these bacteria they can cause illness.

Those most at risk of infection include:

- Very young children
- Those 65 years and older

HOW IS STEC TRANSMITTED?

Infections occur when individuals swallow this *E.coli* bacteria.

Common exposures leading to illness include:

- Eating contaminated or undercooked food
- Drinking untreated water
- Contact with animals
- Contact with poop of infected individuals

WHAT FOODS CAN BE CONTAMINATED WITH STEC?

- Unpasteurized (raw) milk
- Unpasteurized apple cider
- Soft cheeses made from raw milk
- Fresh produce, especially leafy greens
- Ground beef

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF STEC INFECTION?

Symptoms vary depending on the person infected and their own medical history. Common symptoms include:

- Diarrhea (often bloody)
- Bloating
- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Fever
- Abdominal Cramping
- Headache

HOW DO I PREVENT STEC INFECTION?

- Wash hands after bathroom use, diaper changes, contact with animals and before eating
- Cook ground beef to 160°F/70°C
- Avoid raw/unpasteurized items like milk, cheese and juices
- Avoid swallowing water while swimming
- Clean surfaces, utensils and cutting boards after handling raw meat



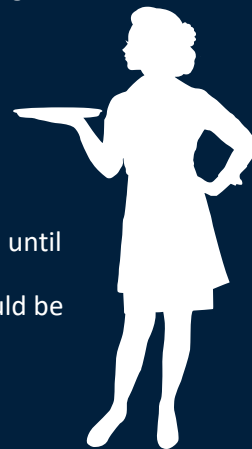
Antibiotics are not recommended to treat STEC. However, it is crucial to stay hydrated by drinking plenty of fluids.

RETURN TO WORK GUIDELINES

People who work in settings with a high risk of spreading infections, such as:

- Restaurants
- Healthcare facilities
- Daycares

Or children who attend daycare should stay home until two stool tests come back negative. These tests should be taken 24 hours apart. Antibiotics are not recommended for most infections.



Hemolytic Uremic Syndrome

Hemolytic Uremic Syndrome (HUS) is a rare but serious complication linked to STEC infection, particularly risky for children, older adults and those with weakened immune systems. It mainly targets the kidneys which can cause kidney failure and other severe health problems. Fatigue, peeing less, abdominal pain and unexplained bruising or bleeding are common symptoms. Early detection and treatment are key to effectively managing HUS.

Learn more about internal cooking temperatures and tips on how to keep your food safe here!



IF YOU BELIEVE YOU HAVE BEEN EXPOSED AND ARE SICK WITH STEC, CONTACT YOUR PRIMARY CARE PROVIDER RIGHT AWAY!