

Outbreak of *E. coli* Infections



Investigation Notice

Posted April 9, 2019 at 2:30 PM ET

CDC, several states, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food Safety and Inspection Service, and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration are investigating a multistate outbreak of Shiga toxin-producing *Escherichia coli* (*E. coli*) O103 infections. This investigation is still ongoing and a specific food item, grocery store, or restaurant chain has not been identified as the source of infections.

Latest Outbreak Information

At A Glance

- [Reported Cases](#): 96
 - [States](#): 5
 - Hospitalizations: 11
 - Deaths: 0
- As of April 9, 2019, 96 people infected with the outbreak strain of *E. coli* O103 have been reported from five states.
 - Eleven people have been hospitalized. No cases of hemolytic uremic syndrome, a type of kidney failure, have been reported. No deaths have been reported.
 - This investigation is still ongoing and a specific food item, grocery store, or restaurant chain has not been identified as the source of infections.
 - CDC is not recommending that consumers avoid any particular food at this time. Restaurants and retailers are not advised to avoid serving or selling any particular food.
 - This is a rapidly evolving investigation. We will update our advice if a source is identified.

Advice to Consumers, Restaurants, and Retailers

[Take action](#) if you have [symptoms of an *E. coli* infection](#):

- Talk to your healthcare provider.
- Write down what you ate in the week before you started to get sick.
- Report your illness to the health department.
- Assist public health investigators by answering questions about your illness.

Follow these [general ways to prevent](#) *E. coli* infection:

- **Wash your hands.** Wash hands after using the restroom or changing diapers, before and after preparing or eating food, and after contact with animals.
- **Cook meats thoroughly to kill harmful germs.** Cook ground beef, pork, and lamb to at least 160°F. Cook steaks and roasts to at least 145°F and let rest for 3 minutes after you remove meat from the grill or stove. Use a food thermometer to check the temperature of the meat.
- **Keep raw meats separate from foods that won't be cooked before eating.** Thoroughly wash hands, counters, cutting boards, and utensils with soap after they touch raw meat to avoid contaminating other foods.
- **Wash fruits and vegetables** before eating, unless the package says the contents have been washed.
- **Avoid raw milk, other unpasteurized dairy products, and unpasteurized juices.**
- **Don't prepare food or drinks for others when you are sick.**

Symptoms of *E. coli* Infection

- People usually get sick from Shiga toxin-producing *E. coli* (STEC) 2–8 days (average of 3–4 days) after swallowing the germ.
- Symptoms often include severe stomach cramps, diarrhea (often bloody), and vomiting.
- Some people with a STEC infection may get a type of kidney failure called hemolytic uremic syndrome.
- For more information, see [Symptoms of *E. coli* Infection](#).

Advice to Clinicians

Antibiotics are not recommended for patients with suspected *E. coli* infections until diagnostic testing can be performed and *E. coli* infection is ruled out. Some studies have shown that administering antibiotics to patients with *E. coli* infections might increase their risk of developing HUS, and a benefit of treatment has not been clearly demonstrated.

Investigation Details

April 9, 2019

As of April 8, 2019, 96 people infected with the outbreak strain of *E. coli* O103 have been reported from five states. CDC is reporting the 96 illnesses that the [PulseNet](#)

laboratory network has confirmed are part of this outbreak. States are investigating additional illnesses that might be a part of this outbreak. A list of the states and the number of confirmed cases in each can be found on the [Map of Reported Cases page](#).

Illnesses started on dates from [March 2, 2019, to March 26, 2019](#). Ill people range in age from 1 to 81 years, with a median age of 17. Fifty-one percent are female. Of 67 people with information available, 11 (16%) have been hospitalized. No deaths and no cases of hemolytic uremic syndrome have been reported.

This investigation is still ongoing and a specific food item, grocery store, or restaurant chain has not been identified as the source of infections. State and local public health officials are interviewing ill people to determine what they ate and other exposures in the week before their illness started. Federal and state regulatory officials use that information to guide efforts to identify a contaminated food and trace it to its source. Learn more about how public health and regulatory agencies [investigate a foodborne disease outbreak](#).

CDC will provide more information as it becomes available.