

Escherichia coli

What is Escherichia coli?

Escherichia coli (abbreviated as E. coli) are bacteria found in the environment, foods, and intestines of people and animals.

What kind of germ is Escherichia coli?

E. coli are a large and diverse group of bacteria. Although most strains of E. coli are harmless, others can make you sick. Some kinds of E. coli can cause diarrhea, while others cause urinary tract infections, respiratory illness and pneumonia, and other illnesses.

How can Escherichia coli be diagnosed?

Symptoms of Shiga toxin-producing E. coli (STEC) infection vary for each person, but often include severe stomach cramps, diarrhea (often bloody), and vomiting. Some people may have a fever, and some infections are very mild, but others are severe or even life-threatening.

How can Escherichia coli be treated?

The best way to treat E. coli infection is to drink plenty of fluids to avoid dehydration and to get as much rest as possible. Antibiotics are usually not given for an E. coli infection, as they may worsen the disease process. In addition, you should not take any medicine that might stop the diarrhea, because it could keep the E. coli bacteria in your system.

Are there any long-term effects of Escherichia coli?

People who contract gastroenteritis from drinking water contaminated with E coli are at an increased risk of developing high blood pressure, kidney problems and heart disease in later life, finds a new study. However, the long-term health effects of E. coli infection in adults are largely unknown.

How can humans get Escherichia coli?

Infection starts when you swallow STEC. This comes from when you get tiny amounts of human or animal feces in your mouth. This happens more than we might think. Exposure to contaminated food, unpasteurized milk, non-disinfected water, contact with cattle, or contact with feces of infected people. Almost everyone has some risk of infection.

How can Escherichia coli be prevented?

Know your chances of getting food poisoning, practice proper hygiene, especially good handwashing, follow the four steps to food safety when preparing food: clean, separate, cooking, and chill, wash fruits and vegetables well under running water, cook meats thoroughly, don't cause cross-contamination of foods, avoid raw milk, unpasteurized dairy products, and unpasteurized juices, and don't swallow water when swimming.