

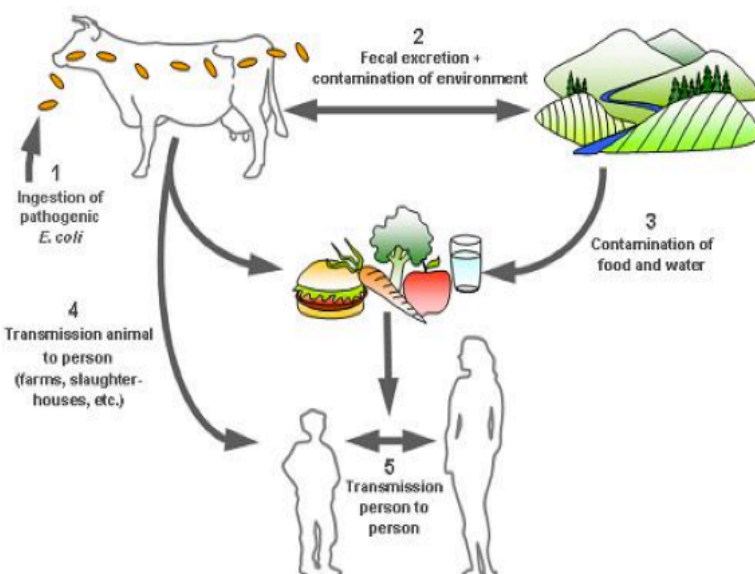
COMMON QUESTIONS ABOUT E.COLI

What is E. coli?

E. coli is the name of a type of bacteria that lives in your intestines and in the intestines of animals. E.Coli cells are typically rod-shaped, and are about 2.0 micrometers (μm) long and 0.25–1.0 μm in diameter. Although most types of E. coli are harmless, some types can make you sick. There is a specific type of strain known as **E. coli O157:H7**, which is one of the most common causes of foodborne disease around the world. In United States, E. Coli causes 73,000 illnesses annually, and the situation is even worse in many developing countries.



How does E.coli spread and cause Disease?



E.coli O157:H7 is most commonly found in cows, although chickens, sheep, and pigs have also been known to carry it. Meat becomes contaminated during slaughter, when infected animal intestines or feces come in contact with the carcass. Other foods that sometimes become contaminated with



E.coli are cheese, unpasteurized juices, alfalfa and radish sprouts, lettuce, spinach, and water. After entering human body, E. coli O157:H7 produces a powerful toxin known as Shiga Toxin, that damages the lining of the small intestine, which can cause bloody diarrhea. You develop an E. coli infection when you ingest this strain of bacteria. Unlike many other disease-causing bacteria, E. coli can cause an infection even if you ingest only small amounts. Because of this, you can be sickened by E. coli from eating a slightly undercooked hamburger or from swallowing a mouthful of pool water.

How can I treat E.coli infection?

For illness caused by E. coli, **no current treatments** can cure the infection, relieve symptoms or prevent complications. There are still lack of studies on Shiga toxin due to its complex structure, so there is no antidote for the toxin provided to the public. However, there are still few things you can do to help recover from the infection.

- **Drink water** - E. coli can cause severe diarrhea, which leads to the loss of water in your body. Keeping yourself hydrated is critical to prevent further severe symptoms.
- **Rest** - E.coli only causes symptoms for 1-3 days. Enough rest will largely help your body recovering more quickly from the infection. Rest can also prevent the further spread of disease in public and working areas. Make sure to also have enough sleep, and eat regularly.



- **See the doctor** – For children, it is always recommended to see doctor when infected by E.coli. Children unlike adults, have weaker immune systems therefore have larger chances of developing severe symptoms include **hemolytic uremic syndrome (HUS)**.



How can I prevent E.coli infection?

Five useful tips that can greatly reduce the chances of getting the disease:

- Wash hands thoroughly before and after eating and after going to the bathroom
- Sanitize all fruits and vegetables before eating by skinning them if possible and washing them before eating
- Avoid allowing raw meats to come into contact with other foods while cooking
- Make sure ground meat (such as hamburger patties) reaches an internal temperature of at least 160°F.
- Wash hands thoroughly after any contact with farm animals