



PUBLIC HEALTH FACT SHEET

ESCHERICHIA COLI (E coli)

Dear Parent:

This is to bring to your attention that a case of Escherichia coli (E coli) has been reported for a student in your child's classroom and to provide you with information about this disease. If your child exhibits any of the symptoms described below, it is recommended that you consult your healthcare provider or the Department of Health in Duval County Epidemiology Program at 904-253-1850.

What is Escherichia coli?

- E coli is a bacteria that normally lives in the intestine
- E coli can produce a poison (Shiga-toxin) that can cause serious damage to the intestines, kidney failure and bleeding in severe cases

What are the Symptoms of E coli?

- Diarrhea (may be bloody)
- Fever
- Abdominal pain
- Vomiting

How is E coli spread?

- Consuming food or water contaminated with the feces of an infected animal or person
- Undercooked beef
- Unpasteurized milk

How can E coli be prevented?

- Thoroughly wash hands after handling raw meat and before handling utensils or food
- Cook meat, especially ground meat, until the juices run clear
- Wash fresh fruits and vegetables before eating especially if eating raw
- Encourage good hand hygiene

Implications for school

- Exclude students or staff
- Must have a healthcare provider's note to return

Resources:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:
www.cdc.gov

American Academy of Pediatrics:
<https://healthychildren.org/English/health-issues/conditions/abdominal/Pages/FoodPoisoning-and-Food-Contamination.aspx>