



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

Region IV Public Health
Clark, Cowlitz, Skamania, Wahkiakum counties
and Cowlitz Tribe

Health Advisory

Please deliver a copy of the accompanying alert to each provider in your organization.

Thank you

Questions regarding this alert may be directed to the office of:

Alan Melnick, MD, MPH
Health Officer

Jennifer Vines, MD, MPH
Deputy Health Officer

Clark County Public Health
Cowlitz County Health Department
Skamania County Health Department
Wahkiakum County Department of Health and Human Services
(360) 397-8412

Please Distribute

Categories of Health Alert messages:

Health Alert: conveys the highest level of importance; warrants immediate action or attention.

Health Advisory: provides important information for specific incident for situation; may not require immediate action.

Health Update: provides updated information regarding an incident or situation; no immediate action necessary.



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HEALTH ADVISORY

August 5, 2010

To Providers:

Clark County Public Health issued a news release today regarding *E. Coli* O157:H7 (see below). We are asking you to consider *E. coli* O157:H7 in your differential diagnosis, especially when seeing pediatric patients with gastrointestinal symptoms who have visited the supervised play area at Lake Shore Athletic Club between July 10 and August 4, 2010. To help with the investigation, we request that you report any cases to the appropriate health department (Clark, Cowlitz, Skamania or Wahkiakum County) at the numbers listed below while obtaining stool samples for *E. coli* O157:H7. Because some laboratories do not routinely perform tests for Enterohemorrhagic *E. Coli* (EHEC), please inform your laboratory that you suspect EHEC when submitting the specimens.

Please report all cases to:

- Clark County Public Health: (360) 397-8182.
- Cowlitz County Health Department: (360) 414-5599
- Skamania County Community Health: (509) 427-3850
- Wahkiakum County Health and Human Services (360) 795-6207

Child with E.coli prompts push to protect others ***Health officials, Lake Shore Athletic Club urge check for symptoms***

Vancouver, WA - A child who recently tested positive for *E. coli* O157:H7 attended a supervised play area at Lake Shore Athletic Club near Vancouver while possibly contagious. Clark County Public Health and Lake Shore managers are asking parents to watch for symptoms among children who visited the play area between July 10 and August 4.

Public Health is currently working with Lake Shore management to contain the situation and eliminate any risk of additional exposures. The club voluntarily closed the play area August 5. It will be disinfected and remain closed until Public Health and Lake Shore management determine there is no risk of exposure. At this time, health officials do not consider other areas of the athletic club to pose a risk to staff or visitors.

E. coli O157:H7 is a bacterial infection that can cause nausea, vomiting and diarrhea that may be bloody. Children with those symptoms should see a health care provider immediately. In addition, their parents should contact Public Health at (360) 397-8022. Infections can range from mild to very severe. They are sometimes fatal. Fever is usually very mild or nonexistent.

The child's positive test for *E. coli* was reported to Public Health by a clinical laboratory. The original source of the infection is not known. In a continuing investigation, Public Health is contacting people who may have been exposed at the athletic club or at other locations visited by the infected child or others who have reported symptoms possibly related to the incident.

E. coli O157:H7 is most commonly found in cattle feces and in food, water or other material contaminated with cattle feces. People can catch it from eating undercooked hamburgers or contaminated raw food such as lettuce, spinach or sprouts. In addition, once infected, people can transmit the infection to others through their hands after visiting the bathroom or diapering, if their hands are not cleaned thoroughly. Some ways to prevent *E. coli* infection include:

- Wash hands frequently and thoroughly with warm, soapy water, rubbing hands together for at least 20 seconds.
- Wash hands after using the toilet or changing a child's diaper.
- Wash hands immediately after petting an animal at a petting zoo.
- Thoroughly cook ground meat.
- Avoid contaminating raw foods through contact with raw meat; for example, do not store lettuce underneath dripping meat and use separate cutting boards for meat and produce.
- Avoid drinking unpasteurized products such as milk or juice.
- Carefully wash all produce, kitchen utensils and countertops before and after cooking.
- Keep children not toilet trained and anyone with diarrhea out of swimming areas.
- Keep children who have diarrhea at home.
- Children diagnosed with *E. coli* must not return to a child care facility until they have two negative stool tests in a 48-hour period.