

Clinical Information – E coli VTEC

Incubation period/onset time

1 to 12 days.

Common clinical features

A range of symptoms possible. Diarrhoea, abdominal pain, bloody diarrhoea and haemolytic uraemic syndrome.

Reservoir

The gastrointestinal tract of cattle, sheep, goats and other, particularly domesticated animals.

Transmission

Person – person spread is common, faecal – oral, particularly in households, nurseries and infant schools. Primary infections are often from : a) contact with infected animals or their faeces, particularly on farms. b) contaminated foodstuffs eg undercooked burgers and contaminated cooked meats, some milk or milk products and contaminated water.

Duration

Variable.

Control whilst you or a member of your family has symptoms

Take extra care with your hygiene and in particular wash hands thoroughly;

- after using the toilet
- control of cross contamination from infected person to ready to eat foods
- ensure supervision of the hand washing of small children
- before and after handling food especially foods which are not going to be cooked again, eg cooked ham
- hand washing of small children to be supervised in nurseries and schools
- before eating, feeding others and preparing foods for others
- after changing dirty nappies and soiled clothing

Whilst symptoms persist it is important to maintain high standards of hygiene.

Exclusion

Until 48 hours after normal stool and symptom free for people not in a risk group. (For those people who are considered to be in a risk group by the local authority there would be the need to further test the faecal sample to ensure fit to return to work. This would include working with young children or the elderly and immuno suppressed. Young children in nurserie or infant school. People who handle open unwrapped foods not subjected to any further heat treatment.)

Last reviewed: 18 December 2008