

## Prevention and Control Measures: *Escherichia coli* (*E. coli*)

### Transmission:

- Water-to-Person: Waterborne transmission occurs both from contaminated drinking water and from recreational waters (lakes, ponds, streams, and swimming pools).
- Person-to-Person: Caring for sick people with vomiting and diarrhea can occur in families, childcare centers, and custodial institutions.
- Food-to-Person: Eating food or drinking liquid handled by a sick person who did not wash their hands well or drinking contaminated unpasteurized (raw) milk or juice.
- Surface-to-Person: Touching a surface or object handled by a sick person or within an animal living area, such as a petting zoo, then touching your mouth.

### Symptoms:

- Symptoms include stomach cramps, diarrhea (often bloody), and vomiting. Fever, if present, is usually less than 101°F.
- Most people will get better within 5-7 days, though severe, even life-threatening, illness is possible in young children, the elderly, and those with health problems. Children and pregnant women should take special care to avoid dehydration.



### Prevention and Control Measures:

- Wash your hands thoroughly after using the bathroom, changing diapers, before preparing or eating food, and after contact with animals or their environments (at farms, petting zoos, fairs, or even in your own back yard).
- Adults and children, with diarrhea or loose stools, should not be in childcare facilities until their diarrhea has resolved.
- Do not swim for 2 weeks after the diarrhea has stopped.
- Wash yourself and your child thoroughly with soap and water before swimming.
- Take your kids on bathroom breaks or check diapers often when swimming and do not change diapers poolside.
- Do not swallow water when swimming or playing in lakes, ponds, streams, swimming pools and backyard “kiddie” pools.
- Cook meats thoroughly. Ground beef and meat that has been needle-tenderized should be cooked to a temperature of at least 160°F/70°C. It is best to use a
- Thermometer as color is not a very reliable indicator of “doneness”.
- Avoid raw milk, unpasteurized dairy products, juices (like fresh apple cider), raw spinach, coleslaw sprouts, and melons.

**For More Information:** Visit [cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov) and type [E. coli](#) in the SEARCH box.



Alabama Department of Public Health  
Infectious Diseases & Outbreaks Division, 201 Monroe St, Montgomery, AL 36104  
[alabamapublichealth.gov/infectiousdiseases](https://alabamapublichealth.gov/infectiousdiseases)