

HALTON REGION PUBLIC HEALTH • Office of the Medical Officer of Health

TEL: 905-825-6000 • TOLL FREE: 1-866-442-5866 • FAX: 905-825-1444

TO: Halton Physicians, Nurse Practitioners, Emergency Departments

FROM: Dr. Joanna Oda, Associate Medical Officer of Health

DATE: December 3, 2020

RE: Local cluster of E. coli O157:H7 in Milton

QUICK FACTS

- Halton Public Health is investigating a cluster of *E. coli* O157:H7 in Milton. The cluster currently consists of two confirmed and one probable case with onset dates ranging from November 10 to November 24, 2020.
- All three cases are under the age of five and are residents of Milton.
- The investigation into potential sources of exposure is ongoing.

KEY MESSAGES FOR HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS

- To assist case finding, please consider submitting stool specimens for patients who present with:
 - acute onset of bloody or non-bloody diarrhea, AND severe abdominal pain or cramping, OR
 - hemolytic uremic syndrome (HUS) or hemorrhagic colitis.
- Stool samples should be collected in usual stool culture media (Cary-Blair) and sent to the closest Public Health Ontario Laboratory with the completed General Test Requisition Form.
- Include the following on the [General Test Requisition Form](#):
 - **The outbreak number: 2236-2020-00254**
 - Symptoms, including whether HUS is present or suspected
- Promptly report any suspected/confirmed cases to Halton Public Health by calling 311.

KEY MESSAGES FOR PATIENTS

- Patients can decrease the risk of *E. coli* O157:H7 and other foodborne illnesses by:
- Washing hands thoroughly before preparing food, after handling raw meat, and after using the toilet.
- Always washing and then sanitizing all utensils, cutting boards and counters that have touched raw meat to prevent *E. coli* from contaminating other foods.
- Using a food thermometer to ensure food is thoroughly cooked to a safe internal temperature.
- Refrigerating or freezing meat as soon as possible after buying it.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- [Verotoxin-producing Escherichia coli information. Public Health Ontario](#)
- [E. coli. Preventing Communicable Diseases. Halton Public Health](#)

Please report all suspected/confirmed cases of [Diseases of Public Health Significance](#) to Public Health immediately by calling 311, 905-825-6000 or toll free at 1-866-442-5866.

PLEASE POST IN EMERGENCY DEPARTMENTS AND PHYSICIAN LOUNGES – IF YOU CAN'T ACCESS HYPERLINKS OR DIDN'T RECEIVE IN FULL, PLEASE EMAIL DOCTORS@HALTON.CA FOR ELECTRONIC COPY.