Communicable Disease Case Reporting and Investigation Protocol
ENTEROPATHOGENIC E. COLI (EPEC)

I. IDENTIFICATION AND DEFINITION OF CASES

A. Clinical Description: A gastrointestinal illness characterized by watery diarrhea with mucus, fever, and dehydration. Diarrhea can be severe and prolonged or persistent.

B. Laboratory Criteria:
- Confirmatory laboratory evidence: Isolation of Enteropathogenic E. coli from any clinical specimen.
- Supportive laboratory evidence: Detection of Enteropathogenic E. coli in a clinical specimen using a culture-independent diagnostic test (CIDT). For example, detection of Enteropathogenic E. coli by polymerase chain reaction (PCR).

Note: Culture confirmation of CIDT positive EPEC specimens is not routinely available at the Wisconsin State Laboratory of Hygiene.

C. Wisconsin Surveillance Case Definition:
- Confirmed: A case that meets the confirmed laboratory criteria for diagnosis.
- Probable: A clinically compatible case that is epidemiologically linked to a confirmed case of Enteropathogenic E. coli.
- Suspect: A case that meets the supportive laboratory criteria for diagnosis.

II. REPORTING

A. Wisconsin Disease Surveillance Category II – Methods for Reporting: This disease shall be reported to the patient’s local health officer or to the local health officer’s designee within 72 hours of recognition of a case or suspected case, per Wis. Admin. Code § DHS 145.04 (3) (b). Report electronically through the Wisconsin Electronic Disease Surveillance System (WEDSS), or mail or fax a completed Acute and Communicable Disease Case Report (F-44151) to the address on the form.

B. Responsibility for Reporting: According to Wis. Admin. Code § DHS 145.04(1), persons licensed under Wis. Stat. ch. 441 or 448, laboratories, health care facilities, teachers, principals, or nurses serving a school or day care center, and any person who knows or suspects that a person has a communicable disease identified in Appendix A.

C. Clinical Criteria for Reporting: None

D. Laboratory Criteria for Reporting: Laboratory evidence of infection by culture or non-culture-based methods. All positive results should be reported.

III. CASE INVESTIGATION

A. Responsibility for case investigation: It is the responsibility of the local health department (LHD) to investigate or arrange for investigation of suspected or confirmed cases as soon as is reasonably possible. A case investigation may include information collected by phone, in person, in writing, or through review of medical records or communicable disease report forms, as necessary and appropriate.

B. Required Documentation:
1. Complete the WEDSS disease incident investigation report, including appropriate, disease-specific tabs. This may be facilitated by completing a Routine Enteric Follow-Up Worksheet. See page 1 of the Worksheet for specific instructions regarding which sections should be completed during routine follow-up.
2. Upon completion of investigation, set WEDSS disease incident process status to “Final.”
C. **Additional Investigation Responsibilities**
   1. As local resources allow, assess patient for high-risk settings or activities to include food handling, providing patient care or child care, or attending a child care facility.
   2. If the case is potentially outbreak related, notify the Wisconsin Division of Public Health (DPH), Bureau of Communicable Diseases (BCD).

IV. **PUBLIC HEALTH INTERVENTIONS AND PREVENTION MEASURES**

   B. Educate the public about proper handwashing after using the toilet, changing diapers, assisting another with toileting, handling contaminated clothing or linens, before cooking, or when associating with high-risk individuals.

V. **CONTACTS FOR CONSULTATION**
   A. Local health departments and tribal health agencies:  
      https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/lh-depts/index.htm

   B. Bureau of Communicable Diseases, Communicable Diseases Epidemiology Section: 608-267-9003

   C. Wisconsin State Laboratory of Hygiene: 1-800-862-1013

VI. **RELATED REFERENCES**


   C. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website: https://www.cdc.gov/ecoli/diarrheagenic-ecoli.html