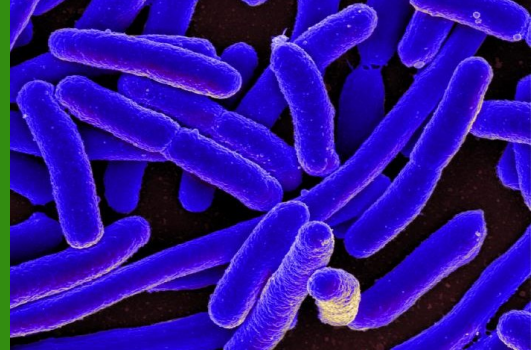


ENTEROPATHOGENIC *E. COLI* (EPEC)



Escherichia coli (*E. coli*) are bacteria that are found in the environment, food, and the intestines of animals and people. Most types of *E. coli* are harmless and are an important part of the digestive tract, but some can make you sick. Enteropathogenic *E. coli* (EPEC) is a type of *E. coli* bacteria that can make you sick with diarrhea.



What causes it?

- ▶ EPEC is spread in food or water that has feces (poop) in it. Poop can get into food or water when people do not wash their hands properly after using the bathroom, and then prepare food or beverages. This can also happen if crops are watered using water that has poop in it.
- ▶ EPEC is also spread by touching an animal or person that has the EPEC bacteria on them, or by touching an object (for example, door handle, faucet, toys) with the EPEC bacteria on it.



What are the signs and symptoms?

Symptoms can be seen as soon as four hours after being infected with EPEC, or can take up to 12 hours or longer to show up. Sometimes people can have EPEC and not have any symptoms. In the past, there was no way to test for EPEC, but now laboratories can test for the bacteria in poop samples.

- ▶ Watery diarrhea with mucus (without blood)
- ▶ Dehydration (losing too much water)
- ▶ Fever
- ▶ Vomiting



What are the treatment options?

People who are sick with EPEC may need to be given fluids so they do not lose too much water. Most people recover with supportive care alone and do not need other treatment.



How can it be prevented?

- ▶ Wash your hands with soap and water after going to the bathroom, after changing diapers, and before eating or making food to prevent getting poop in foods or beverages.
- ▶ People with an EPEC infection who work in food handling, provide patient care or child care, or who attend a child care facility should stay home while they have symptoms and until they have been free from diarrhea for 24 hours.

