

**MSAD # 13 / RSU #83  
Health Alert**

**Gastrointestinal Illness – E-Coli  
Important Notice to Parents  
<Date>**

Escherichia coli (E. coli) infection is a bacterial disease, with the most severe infection caused by E. coli strains that produce a potent toxin. These strains are known as Shiga-toxin producing E. coli (STEC).

Symptoms can include bloody or non-bloody diarrhea, stomach cramps, low-grade fever, nausea, weight loss, and vomiting. Approximately 8% of people infected with STEC can develop the condition hemolytic uremic syndrome (HUS). This condition can lead to kidney failure and death.

Symptoms usually begin 3 - 4 days, range of 2 - 10 days, after exposure and last for approximately 5 - 10 days.

E. coli is transmitted by contaminated food or beverages or person-to-person by the fecal-oral route.

A person can spread E. coli during acute illness and can shed E. coli in stool for up to three weeks after symptoms resolve.

Any ill individuals should remain home during the symptomatic period and for at least 24 hours after all symptoms resolve. If your child is sick during the day, please do not send them to school the next day even if they are feeling fine.

Frequent hand washing, particularly after using the restroom, assisting someone with diarrhea and/or vomiting, after contact with animals, after swimming, and before and after food preparation will help prevent contact with the bacteria.

Contact your primary care provider if gastrointestinal symptoms last more than a few days or are severe.

Please contact the school nurse, Mel Chadbourne, RN if you have any questions. More information is also available at the Maine CDC web site.