

April 23, 2018

Dear Colleagues,

**Re: *E. coli* O157:H7 outbreak in Edmonton Zone - UPDATE**

I issued a public notification in March 2018, regarding a cluster of *E. coli* O157:H7. The number of lab-confirmed cases of *E. coli* O157:H7 has increased to 34, including 11 patients who have needed hospital care, and one patient who has died, likely due to the infection.

While 21 of these lab-confirmed cases are linked to Mama Nita's Binalot restaurant in Edmonton, AHS no longer has public health concerns related to this business. However, we are investigating 12 lab-confirmed cases of *E. coli* O157:H7 that have no direct links to Mama Nita's Binalot. The investigation continues to identify a potential source.

**What is *E. Coli* O157:H7?**

*E. coli* O157:H7 is an enterohemorrhagic *Escherichia coli* (EHEC). It produces a Shiga toxin which often results in more severe disease than other *E. coli* infections. Symptoms most often arise 3 days after exposure. Symptoms include diarrhea, often bloody, and severe abdominal pain. Fever is often not present.

Hemolytic uremic syndrome (HUS) is an uncommon, but severe, complication of an *E. coli* O157:H7 infection. HUS most often occurs in children but has also been seen in elderly individuals. It is estimated 13% of patients with *E. coli* O157 infection may develop HUS. HUS characteristically includes hemolytic anemia, thrombocytopenia and acute kidney injury. HUS develops 2-14 days after the onset of diarrhea.

**If you suspect *E. coli* O157:H7 related disease, what testing should be done?**

Submitting a stool specimen for culture and sensitivity is the best way to find out if someone is infected with *E. coli* O157:H7.

Stool samples should be collected as soon as possible in patients with:

- Acute bloody diarrhea
- Painful, non-bloody diarrhea
- Acute diarrhea in immune-compromised patients
- Diarrhea with fever (during outbreak situations)
- Diarrhea in a patient with a family member or other contacts with a positive stool culture for *E. Coli* O157:H7

**If you suspect *E. coli* O157:H7, how should your management change?**

Please refer to <https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/assets/info/hp/diseases/if-hp-dis-ecoli-stec.pdf> for concise and clear guidance on *E. coli* O157:H7 management.

Additional information will be collected over the next days to weeks as the investigation continues. Please monitor the AHS Edmonton Zone MOH webpage at <https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/medstaff/Page7082.aspx#ezmohbulletins>

Thank you for your attention to this matter. If you have further questions please contact the MOH on-call at 780-433-3940.

Sincerely,

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Medical Officer of Health  
Alberta Health Services – Edmonton Zone