

SANTA CRUZ COUNTY

Health Services

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E. coli Signs and Symptoms

Escherichia coli (abbreviated as *E. coli*) are a large and diverse group of bacteria. Although most strains of *E. coli* are harmless, others can be pathogenic, meaning they can cause illness. The types of *E. coli* that can cause illness can be transmitted through contaminated water or food, or through contact with animals or persons.

The symptoms of *E. coli* infections vary for each person but often include severe stomach cramps, diarrhea (often bloody), and vomiting. If there is fever, it usually is not very high (less than 101°F/less than 38.5°C). Most people get better within 5–7 days. Some infections are very mild, but others are severe or even life-threatening.

The incubation period for *E. coli* is usually 3-4 days after the exposure, but may be as short as 1 day or as long as 10 days.

Contact your healthcare provider if you have diarrhea that lasts for more than 3 days, or is accompanied by high fever, blood in the stool, or so much vomiting that you cannot keep liquids down and you pass very little urine.

For more information on *e coli* go to <http://www.azdhs.gov/preparedness/epidemiology-disease-control/foodborne/index.php#stec>

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