For Immediate Release:

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Contact: Dr. Murray McQuigge, Medical Officer of Health
(519) 376-9420

E. coli Precautions

Public Health staff in Walkerton has noticed many people with raw-looking hands. "I am concerned that people are using too much chlorine in their efforts to prevent the spread of the E. coli bacteria," says Dr. Murray McQuigge. Here are the guidelines for both washing hands and washing dishes.

When washing hands:

· Place approximately 1.5 ounces of liquid household bleach in 10 gallons of water.

· Mix and let stand for at least 10 minutes prior to use.

· The mixture may be placed in suitable containers for use. Using a clean scoop dip treated water from container and wet hands. Wash with soap and rinse hands with treated water. (Do not wash hands directly in the container unless wash water is emptied after each use.)

When washing dishes:

· Wash dishes with boiled or bottled water and dish detergent. Rinse the dishes with boiled or bottled water.

or

· Use a domestic dishwasher, as normal. Remove the dishes from the dishwasher and put them in a solution of approximately 1 ounce of household bleach per 3 gallons of clear water to disinfect them. This is very effective in killing bacteria yet won't harm your hands.

or

    Step1: Use town water with dish soap to wash dishes.
Step 2: Rinse dishes in town water.

Step 3: Soak dishes for one minute in a solution of 1 oz (30ml) of bleach to sink 3 gallons of lukewarm water. Let dishes air dry.

· To protect your hands from irritation you may wish to use a pair of gloves when washing dishes.

It is important to be clear about how E. coli is transmitted. It is transmitted by ingestion of contaminated food or water. Thorough hand washing is the best way to prevent contamination. Make sure your hands are properly washed after using the toilet, handling diapers, pets, livestock, or before preparing or eating food. E. coli can be excreted in an infected person's stool and is communicable for about one week for adults and up to three weeks for children.

If your pet has diarrhea, talk to your veterinarian. Be sure you wash your hands after coming in contact with your pet's stool or kitty litter.

"I appreciate that the people of Walkerton have had a lot of information thrown at them. I commend them for holding up so well in stressful circumstances," says Dr. McQuigge.