E. coli has been found in the Town of Walkerton's municipal water supply. E. coli has also been isolated from the stools of many ill Walkerton residents. We now believe the water supply is the source of infection.

Symptoms

Stomach cramps, diarrhea (possibly bloody), fever, nausea, vomiting

If you or a family member have any of the symptoms, it is important to wash your hands

· After going to the bathroom.

· Before preparing food for others. If possible, have someone who has not been infected prepare the meals.

Hemolytic Uremic Syndrome (HUS)

Under 10% of individuals with E. coli infection will develop Hemolytic Uremic Syndrome (HUS). HUS is a serious complication of E. coli infection that may lead to kidney failure. Symptoms of HUS may include a decrease in the amount of urine produced, swelling in the face, hands, and feet, paleness of the skin, irritability and fatigue. Young children (especially under 5 years of age) and the elderly are most at risk for HUS. It is important to watch for the signs of HUS even after diarrhea has stopped. Anyone with these symptoms should see their physician immediately.

Treatment

Generally, an E. coli infection must run its course. Antibiotics and antimitotility medications are not recommended and may increase the risk of complications.

Emergency Water Treatment

1. Drinking Water - Boil water for 5 minutes or use bottled water.

2. Hand Washing Water

· Place 1.5 oz 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).

Hand Washing Solution using a 10 Litre Container

Add 10ml (2 teaspoons) of bleach to 10 litres of tap water. Mix well and let stand for 15 minutes.

3. Other Water Use

· Washing Dishes: Wash dishes with boiled or bottled water and dish detergent. Rinse the dishes with boiled or bottled water. Or you can 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. To protect your hands from irritation you may wish to wear a pair of gloves when washing dishes.

Alternate Method of Washing and Disinfecting Dishes Using Town Water

Step 1: 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.

· Washing Food: Wash ready to eat foods such as fruits and vegetables in bottled water or water boiled for at least 5 minutes. Discard ice cubes made with contaminated water.

· Bathing/Showering: Adults may continue to shower as long as no water is swallowed. Sponge baths are recommended for children instead of tub baths. Use a clean supply of water if possible. After you bathe or shower wash your hands in chlorinated water.

· Brushing Teeth: Use bottled or boiled water.

· Laundry: Continue to launder clothes as usual.

· Other Water Treatment: We recommend that filtered water and water passing through reverse osmosis units be boiled for 5 minutes before drinking. Do not assume that filtration devices will remove the contamination.

Schools & Day Care Centres (when these facilities reopen)
· School children recovering from diarrhea are not to return to class until they have been symptom free for 24 hours.

· Daycare children must have two negative stool cultures after their last episode of diarrhea before they return.

For additional information visit our website at http://www.publichealthgreybruce.on.ca