Bruce-Grey-Owen-Sound Health Unit

Information for Schools Regarding the Walkerton E. coli Outbreak

Your best protection against these bacteria is thorough handwashing.

Wash hands with soap, non-contaminated water, using a friction-like rubbing action of both hands to generate lather, then rinse thoroughly.

Handwashing should be practiced:

- after using the toilet or handling diapers
- before and after eating, drinking and smoking

Handwashing should be demonstrated and reinforced to students by teachers. Pictorial handwashing sheets may be used as part of the instruction and posted in washrooms.

Transmission of E. coli:

E-coli can be passed from person-to-person by hand to mouth contact. This means eating, drinking or smoking with hands that have been contaminated. Hands are contaminated by coming in direct contact with infected stool. Thorough handwashing will remove this contamination.

Symptoms of E. coli infection:

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

Exclusions from School/School Related Events:

Students showing symptoms are to be excluded from school.

Students in apparent good health (no symptoms) may attend school even though family members may be ill with symptoms. These students can participate in any events (in or out of town).

Returning to School:

Students recovering from diarrhea are not to return to class until they have been free of all symptoms for 24 hours.

Cleaning Practices:

In general, no extra environmental cleaning, other than what would normally be carried out for the school, is necessary. Wiping down desks, tables etc. is not needed and may unnecessarily increase anxiety. Follow the cleaning methods already established for the school. Extra effort is
advised to monitor and maintain washrooms with dispensed soap, paper towels or blow dryers, and hot and cold running water. Maintain toilets and sinks in a clean condition.