

LETTER FOR PARENTS

24th November 2023

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Dear Parent/Guardian,

Re: Increase in Shiga toxin-producing Escherichia coli (STEC) cases and incidents

UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) has advised of a recent increase in Shiga toxin-producing Escherichia coli (STEC) cases and incidents in the Greater Manchester area, with some confirmed cases attending childcare settings during their infectious period.

A child attending a nursery in Rochdale has recently suffered from illness caused by this infection that has spread to other children in that setting.

What is STEC infection?

STEC is very infectious and can cause illness ranging from mild diarrhoea to life threatening conditions. For most cases, symptoms can last up to 2 weeks in cases without complications, but occasionally, and, in a small number of children, serious kidney and other complications can occur. Person-to-person spread is by direct contact with someone who has the infection, particularly within families and childcare settings. Outbreaks and sporadic cases have also been linked with handling animals.

How can you prevent further spread of infection?

STEC is infectious and can be passed to others, even by those with no symptoms. To prevent the spread of the STEC, it is important to always wash your hands with soap and water after going to the toilet and before and after handling food. Children will be supervised and supported with hand washing and additional cleaning measures within the settings.

Additional measures to prevent spread,

- Washing hands thoroughly with liquid soap and running water after handling raw meat, before meals and after contact with animals.
- Avoid sharing of towels or face flannels with those infected
- Thoroughly clean all hard surfaces with soap and water.
- Cleaning animal faeces from footwear/buggy wheels after visits to animal attractions and washing hands after doing so.

IMPORTANT - What to do if your child develops symptoms?

It is very important that any child who develops diarrhoea and/or vomiting should stay at home and not attend any school, childcare place or playgroup. Please inform the setting of your child's symptoms. **Please keep you child away from school/nursery until 48 hours after they have stopped vomiting or had diarrhoea.**

Contact your GP or NHS 111 immediately if your child becomes more unwell or has any blood in their poo or if the diarrhoea lasts longer than 24 hours, so they can assess your child and arrange for further testing, where appropriate. Please take this letter with you.

We very much appreciate your assistance in supporting these measures to stop the infection from spreading.

Further information relating to STEC can be found on the following websites:

- NHS Choices
<http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/Escherichia-Coli-O157/Pages/Introduction.aspx>
- UK Health Security Agency
[Shiga toxin-producing Escherichia coli: how to avoid and treat - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk/government/news/shiga-toxin-producing-escherichia-coli-how-to-avoid-and-treat)
- The UK E. coli Support Group - Haemolytic Uraemic Syndrome Help (HUSH)
<http://www.ecoli-uk.com/>
- Kidney Research, UK
[Haemolytic uraemic syndrome - Kidney Research UK](http://www.kidneyresearchuk.org/haemolytic-uraemic-syndrome)

Yours sincerely,



Kuiama Thompson
Director of Public Health