

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

FOR PARENTS OF YOUNG FARM KIDS



WHAT IS STEC?

- *Shiga toxin producing E.coli* (STEC), is a nasty toxin producing bacteria, also known as VTEC (*Verotoxin producing E.coli*).
- It spreads easily and is life threatening in one in ten cases.
- **This type of E.coli is a NEW illness to New Zealand.**
- Taranaki has one of the highest rates of STEC and nearly 50% of cases end up in hospital.
- **Children under five living on and around farms are most at risk.**

WHAT ARE THE MAIN SYMPTOMS?

- Watery diarrhoea (runny poos).
- Blood in the diarrhoea.
- Severe stomach pains.
- Vomiting.

Please seek medical advice for any of these symptoms.

Young children are more likely to get a severe complication called Haemolytic Uraemic Syndrome (HUS) which could damage their kidneys. Symptoms of HUS include:

- looking pale
- bruising easily
- a reduction in passing urine.

See a doctor immediately if your child develops any of these symptoms.

PEOPLE RISK INFECTION WHEN THEY:

- have contact with animals or animal waste
- have contact with people that have the infection
- drink unpasteurised milk or untreated water
- eat undercooked or contaminated food
- swim in water where you can't see your feet.

Beware of other possible sources of contamination such as:

- muddy puddles near animals on farms or animals' drinking troughs
- farm clothing and footwear
- dogs and other farm animals coming into the house.

TREATMENT

- Drink plenty of fluids such as water or oral rehydration drinks available from pharmacies.
- **Seek the advice of your doctor before taking any medication for this illness as some may make it worse.**

PREVENTION TIPS

- Hand washing is one of the best ways to prevent infection.
- Cooking meat well will kill the STEC bacteria. Avoid eating undercooked meat.
- Boil untreated water and raw milk before drinking it.

HELP PREVENT STEC FROM SPREADING

STEC spreads easily.

Anyone with the STEC infection should stay away from childcare, school or work until being cleared by their doctor, especially:

- food handlers
- healthcare staff
- early childcare staff
- children under five attending preschool.

Family members of someone who has contracted STEC should see a doctor if they also develop symptoms.

