



<sup>UW</sup>  
**Extension**

**Wisconsin Nutrition Education Program**

***Food Safety Alert!***

**Protecting your family:**

What you should  
know about

***E. coli O157:H7***

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## ***E. coli* 0157: H7 at a Glance**

The bacteria *E. coli* 0157: H7, also just known as 0157 is a rare but dangerous type of *E. coli*. Some animals carry the bacteria. It can be transferred from animal to animal, from animal to human, and from person to person through close contact. You can become infected by eating contaminated food.

### **Food Sources**

Children and adults have become sick from consuming under-cooked hamburger, raw milk, unpasteurized juice and cider, contaminated water, and vegetables fertilized with cow manure-all foods that may be contaminated with *E. coli* 0157:H7.

### **The Illness**

0157 is a dangerous bacteria. Just a few of these bacteria can make you sick. If you eat contaminated food or water, you will begin to feel sick after 2-10 days. The illness normally lasts for one week. People who are infected may suffer bloody diarrhea, cramps and fever.

### **Complications**

Young children, the elderly, pregnant women and those who are already sick may become extremely ill. Children may develop HUS (hemolytic uremic syndrome) that can cause kidney failure, brain damage, strokes and seizures. Children and the elderly are most at risk of death from this illness.



## **Protect Your Family.**

### **Follow these food safety steps:**

- To kill 0157: Cook meat and hamburger to 160°F (until the juices run clear); cook chicken to 180°F (until the juices run clear).
- At restaurants, return any undercooked food for further cooking.
- Don't drink raw milk.
- Use only safe, treated water.
- Wash all fruits and vegetables before eating, even those that you purchase from the grocery store.
- Wash your hands with warm, soapy water before cooking or eating, and after using the bathroom.
- Wash knives and cutting boards with hot, soapy water after working with raw meat and chicken.
- Keep raw meat and chicken separate from fresh fruits and vegetables in the refrigerator and on the counter.
- Be aware that children, the elderly, and people who are already sick should be extra careful. These persons should not consume the following foods:
  - Unpasteurized cider
  - Raw or rare hamburger
  - Alfalfa sprouts
  - Raw (unpasteurized) milk and cheese made from raw milk

Food in the supermarket today is generally safe to eat, but a little care taken in your kitchen - like cooking hamburgers thoroughly -will help keep your family safe and healthy.