



**Public Health Advisory**  
**Escherichia coli O157:H7 illness associated with Costco Chicken Salad**  
**November 25, 2015**

**Background**

The CDC, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, the U.S. Department of Agriculture Food Safety and Inspection Service, and public health officials in several states are investigating an outbreak of Shiga toxin-producing *Escherichia coli* O157:H7 (STEC O157:H7) infections. Epidemiologic evidence suggests that rotisserie chicken salad made and sold in Costco Wholesale stores maybe associated with this outbreak. On November 20, 2015, Costco reported to public health officials that the company had removed all remaining rotisserie chicken salad from all stores in the United States and stopped further production of the product until further notice.

The incubation period for Shiga toxin-producing *E. coli* (STEC O157:H7) is 2-10 days (average of 3-4 days) after exposure. Some illnesses last longer and can be more severe, resulting in hemolytic uremic syndrome (HUS). HUS can occur in people of any age but is most common in young children under 5 years, older adults, and people with weakened immune systems.

**Epidemiology**

The majority of illnesses have been reported from the following states: California (1), Colorado (4), Missouri (1), Montana (6), Utah (5), Virginia (1), and Washington (1).<sup>1</sup> To date here have been no cases identified in Clark County, Nevada..

Among people for whom information is available, illnesses started on dates ranging from October 6, 2015 to November 3, 2015. Ill people range in age from 5 years to 84, with a median age of 18. Fifty-seven percent of ill people are female. Five (29%) people reported being hospitalized, and two people developed hemolytic uremic syndrome (HUS), a type of kidney failure. No deaths have been reported.

**Actions for Clinicians**

- ***Use of Antibiotics*** - Antibiotics are not recommended for patients with suspected STEC O157:H7 infections until complete diagnostic testing can be performed and STEC O157:H7 infection is ruled out<sup>2</sup>. Some studies have shown that administering antibiotics to patients with STEC O157:H7 infections might increase their risk of
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developing HUS, and a benefit of treatment has not been clearly demonstrated. Features of HUS include low platelet count, anemia due to broken blood cells, and kidney failure.

- **Laboratory testing** - In general, all stools submitted for testing from patients with acute community-acquired diarrhea should be cultured for STEC O157:H7. Clinical laboratories should report and send these isolates to Southern Nevada Public Health Laboratory as soon as possible for additional characterization.
- **Reporting** - If you are evaluating a patient with signs and symptoms of STEC O157:H7 infection with a history of consumption of Rotisserie Chicken Salad purchased at Costco, please contact the Southern Nevada Health District Office of Epidemiology at (702)759-1300.

### **References:**

1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Multistate outbreak of Shiga toxin-producing *Escherichia coli* O157:H7 Infections Linked to Costco rotisserie Chicken Salad. <http://www.cdc.gov/ecoli/2015/o157h7-11-15/index.html>
2. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. *E. coli* (*Escherichia coli*): Guidance to Healthcare Providers and Clinical Laboratories <http://www.cdc.gov/ecoli/clinicians.html>