

**THE GREATEST NEW CAR SHOWROOM IN THE WWW**

[Explore Showroom >](#)



SEARCH LIFESTYLE

SEARCH HEALTH

**HEALTH**

Related topics: [Healthy living](#)

## How to avoid catching E.coli

Practical tips for preparing food

[Send](#) [Share](#) [Print](#)

Tue 31 May, 2011 11:00 am BST



© fotolia

An E.coli outbreak which started in north Germany has already caused the deaths of 14 people, with more than 300 seriously ill.

Experts are warning that the worse is still to come. Other cases have been reported in the UK, Sweden, Denmark, France and the Netherlands, all linked to travel in Germany.

E. coli is a bacterium which lives in the gut of humans and animals. Usually harmless, but some strains can produce toxins which cause fatal disease in humans. People are usually infected after eating undercooked meat or eating vegetables grown on land which has become contaminated.

Another source of outbreaks in the UK in recent years has been petting farms.

Several of the cases in Germany have been linked to eating contaminated organic cucumbers from Spain. However, it is still not clear whether they are the original source of the bacteria, or became contaminated in Germany from another source.

Travellers in Germany are now being advised by the UK Health Protection Agency to avoid eating raw cucumbers, lettuce and tomatoes.

In the UK, E.coli 0157 is usually the cause of serious illness, such as haemolytic uraemic syndrome (HUS), which can cause kidney failure and death, but in Germany a rare and particularly virulent bacterial strain - E.coli O104 - is the cause of the outbreak.

This particular strain appears to be causing severe disease in more people. In general, up to 10 per cent of people infected with E.coli are at risk of HUS, but this figure is reaching 50 per cent in Germany.

Rather than affecting young children, the elderly and those with weakened immune systems, which is usually the case, the E.coli 0104 outbreak is mainly affecting adults – almost 70 per cent of whom are women.

### How can I protect myself from E. coli?

There are four main areas where you can follow good practice to ensure that you minimize any risks:

- Personal hygiene
- Food storage
- Food preparation
- Cooking

#### Personal Hygiene

Always wash your hands after using the bathroom, before handling food and after handling raw meat. This will help to stop bacteria being transferred from raw to fresh or already cooked foods.

#### Food storage

- Check your fridge is at the correct temperature for storing food – between 0 and 5 - degrees centigrade
- Always store fresh food in the fridge. The bacterium thrives at warmer temperatures
- Keep bottles and jars closed
- Cover leftovers and keep them in the fridge
- Eat leftovers within 2 days (1 day for rice based dishes)
- Keep raw meats away from cooked meats
- Store raw meats at the bottom of the fridge (to stop juices dripping onto other foods)

#### Food preparation

ADVERTISEMENT

**THE GREATEST NEW CAR SHOWROOM IN THE WWW**

[Explore Showroom >](#)



#### LATEST VIDEOS



00:00 / 07:51

#### MOST POPULAR

- [Dr Chris Steele's PROVEN Fat Farewell Diet: Part 2](#)  
Fri 28 Jul, 2006 12:00 am BST
- [Dr Chris Steele's Fat Farewell Diet Plan](#)  
Fri 28 Jul, 2006 12:00 am BST
- [Seven ways sex is good for your health](#)  
Fri 11 Feb, 2011 12:00 am GMT
- [Dr Chris Steele's PROVEN Fat Farewell Diet: Part 1](#)  
Fri 28 Jul, 2006 12:00 am BST
- [Dr Chris Steele's PROVEN Fat Farewell Diet: Part 3](#)  
Fri 28 Jul, 2006 12:00 am BST

#### LIFESTYLE QUESTIONS & ANSWERS



Ask a question and get answers from real people on [Yahoo! Answers](#)

[How can immunisation not work?](#)  
2 Hours Ago

[Help!Constant static in my ears!?!?](#)  
2 Hours Ago

- Wash your hands before handling food
- Dry hands as wet hands can transfer bacteria more easily
- Keep raw fish and meat separate from other food, including food which has been already cooked
- Never use knives and other utensils on raw meats and fish and then on other foods
- Always wash salads, including those which are pre-washed
- Clean kitchen surfaces regularly

Is having brown hair and blue eyes uncommon?  
2 Hours Ago

## Cooking

Cooking at the correct temperature kills the bacteria. Undercooked food is a major cause of food poisoning. All parts of the food should reach 70 degrees centigrade for at least 2 minutes.

For rare beef and lamb make sure that the outside is properly cooked as this is where the bacteria are found.

Pork and rolled joints of other meats should not be served rare. The juices should have no pink or red in them.

Minced meats, sausages, pork, chicken, kebabs, burgers and chicken nuggets should always be fully cooked.



### HEALTH QUIZ: Do you know how to prevent food poisoning?

Food poisoning can range from mild to severe, but most can be prevented. Do you know how?

[Take the quiz now >>](#)

[More quizzes >>](#)



#### Introduction to E coli

A description of how the bacteria E. coli is transmitted  
[Read more >>](#)



#### Food poisoning in the over-60s on the rise

Older generation ignoring use-by dates on foods  
[Read more >>](#)



#### E. coli food poisoning

What you need to know  
[Read more >>](#)



#### E. coli outbreak in Surrey

Twelve children hospitalised  
[Read more >>](#)



#### Second petting farm closes

Hygiene arrangements unsatisfactory  
[Read more >>](#)

In this page: [Healthy living](#) [Health A To Z / F / Food poisoning](#)

## HEALTH ZONES

Fertility and pregnancy    Babies and children  
Young people                Women's health  
Men's health                 Quit smoking  
Weight loss                  Sexual health

## MORE HEALTH ZONES

Healthy living                50+ health  
First aid                        Travel health  
Mental wellbeing            Allergies and hay fever  
Search                         Health A-Z

## QUICK LINKS

Quizzes                        Spotlights  
Fertility Calculator           BMI Calculator  
Dr Chris's Diet Plan        Quit Smoking Plan  
Privacy Policy                Disclaimer

Powered by [TheFamilyGP.com](#)

This site and its contents ©2006-2010 TheFamilyGP.com.

DISCLAIMER: The contents of this site are for information purposes only and do not constitute medical advice. Information on specific topics may not apply to everyone or in all cases. If you think you may need medical attention please consult a qualified health practitioner.