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Multistate *E. coli* Outbreak Investigation- Cases Identified in Gunnison County October 24th, 2024

Gunnison County Health & Human Services in coordination with the Colorado Department of Public Health & Environment (CDPHE) and the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC) are investigating an outbreak of *E. coli* O157:H7, or Shiga toxin-producing *E. coli* (STEC), cases associated with the McDonald's Quarter Pounder Hamburger. Other agencies included in the multistate outbreak investigation are the Food & Drug Administration (FDA) and U. S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) as well as the McDonald's restaurant chain.

On October 22nd, 2024, the CDC released information on an investigation update about a multistate outbreak of STEC. As of that date, 49 associated cases have been identified across 10 states, with 26 of the cases being in Colorado. An older person with underlying health conditions in Colorado has died. A few cases have been identified in Gunnison county- none of the cases have been hospitalized or have died as a result of the infection. Additional cases and updates are anticipated as the investigation continues.

Early investigation information from interviews and suppliers suggests a possible outbreak source- contaminated fresh-sliced onions used on the McDonald's Quarter Pounder Hamburger. These onions are primarily used on the Quarter Pounder and not on other menu items. Based on this information, McDonald's in some states including Colorado have stopped producing the item.

E. coli is a bacteria commonly found in the intestines of humans and animals. While most strains are harmless, certain types, including those that are capable of producing Shiga toxins, can cause severe illness. Most people with a STEC infection start feeling sick three to four days after eating or drinking something that contains the bacteria. However, illnesses can start anywhere from one to 10 days after exposure.

Symptoms of Shiga toxin-producing *E. coli* infection can include:

- Severe stomach cramps.
- Diarrhea (often bloody).
- Vomiting.
- Fever.

What to do:

- Monitor for symptoms. If you experience symptoms of Shiga toxin-producing *E. coli* (STEC) infections, contact a health care provider.
- Practice good hand hygiene. Wash hands thoroughly with soap and water after using the bathroom, changing diapers, or before preparing food.
- Do not prepare food for others while experiencing diarrhea.



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Information Resources:

CDPHE Press Release: <https://cdphe.colorado.gov/press-release/state-health-department-coordinating-with-cdc-as-it-warns-of-e-coli-associated-with>

CDC Information Update: <https://www.cdc.gov/ecoli/outbreaks/investigation-update-e-coli-o157-2024.html>

General Food Recall Resources:

FDA: <https://www.fda.gov/safety/recalls-market-withdrawals-safety-alerts>

USDA: <https://www.fsis.usda.gov/recalls>

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