

Enterotoxigenic E. coli (ETEC)

What is ETEC?

- Enterotoxigenic E. coli, or ETEC, are a group of bacteria that causes intestinal illness.
- "Traveler's diarrhea" is frequently caused by ETEC as it is more commonly found in developing countries.
- ETEC is transmitted through eating or drinking contaminated food or water.

Who can get ETEC?

It only takes a small amount of ETEC bacteria to make you sick and anyone can get sick from it.

People can get ETEC from:

- eating raw or undercooked meats (or eating something that touched it)
- eating un-washed fruits or vegetables
- drinking untreated water or ice
- accidental consumption of recreational water (pools, lakes, rivers)
- contact with an infected person or animal or their feces (poop)

Symptoms of ETEC:

Symptoms usually start 1-3 days after exposure, and usually last about 3-4 days.

Symptoms include:

- Diarrhea
- Stomach cramps or pain
- Fever
- Nausea / Vomiting
- Headaches
- Muscle aches
- Bloating



What to do if you have symptoms:

Contact your health provider if you have concerns or questions about your health, especially if you have bloody diarrhea or severe stomach cramping. They may ask you to submit a stool (poop) sample to diagnose ETEC.

Tell your healthcare provider if you have other medical conditions or a weakened immune system (such as HIV infection or from chemotherapy treatment) because you may be more likely to become severely ill.

How to decrease your chance of getting ETEC:

The best way to decrease your chance of infection is to practice good hygiene.

-Wash your hands often, especially:

- after using the bathroom
- before, during, and after preparing food
- after touching feces (poop) or garbage
- after contact with animals

-Cook all meats all the way.

-Keep raw meats away from other foods.

-Wash all fruits and vegetables.



Treatment:

There is no specific medication, cure, or vaccine for an ETEC infection and most people recover without medical treatment.

People with an ETEC infection should drink plenty of fluids to prevent dehydration. Dehydration can cause serious issues and may lead to hospitalization.

If you are pregnant or have a weakened immune system, talk with your healthcare provider to discuss a treatment plan.