

What kind of infection is it?

E. coli is a bacteria that normally lives in the intestines of most people and most types are harmless. Enteropathogenic *E. coli* (or EPEC) is a special kind of *E. coli* that lets it attach to intestinal cells. Some types of EPEC may cause diarrhea.

How do people get infected?

- EPEC is most likely transmitted from one person with the infection to another.
- EPEC causes diarrhea in infants and children in developing countries. EPEC has been detected in the stool (poop) of many healthy children with no diarrhea in the United States. Therefore it is not clear if finding EPEC in children with diarrhea in the US means that it is the cause of their diarrhea.

What are the usual symptoms?

- In children with EPEC diarrhea in developing countries, symptoms include diarrhea and vomiting. Little is known about the symptoms of EPEC infection in US children.

How long does it last?

- EPEC has caused prolonged diarrhea in children in poor countries.

How is it treated?

- Prevent dehydration by drinking fluids. For young children, use a rehydration solution such as Pedialyte® or Rehydralyte®. Even a few sips or spoonfuls at a time can help. Warning signs of dehydration include dry mouth, decreased urination, or dizziness.
- Antibiotics are not generally recommended for the treatment of EPEC in the US.

Are there possible complications?

- Dehydration from fluid loss is the major complication.

Comments:

- Until recently, most doctors were not able to diagnose EPEC because testing was only available in research labs. Now that testing is available, doctors are still learning about this infection.
- Wash hands carefully with soap and water after going to the bathroom or changing diapers, cleaning up vomit or stool.
- Clean contaminated surfaces and disinfect with bleach solution (5-25 tablespoons of household bleach per gallon of water).
- People with diarrhea should not prepare food.