

E.coli 0104:H4 Outbreak in Germany



TO: Primary Care Practitioners, Hospital, Laboratories, and Pharmacies

DATE: June 3, 2011 to Hospital and June 6, 2011 to others listed above (Alert 35)

The E.coli 0104:H4 outbreak in Germany has led to the importation of travel-related cases of this disease to other countries including the United States.

Since routine testing for E. coli 0104:H4 is not conducted, the Ministry of Health of Ontario and the Ontario Agency for Health Protection and Promotion is requesting that:

1. **physicians heighten their suspicion of the possibility of Shiga toxin producing E.coli as the causative agent, and the potential complications, including Haemolytic Uremic Syndrome (HUS), for all travelers from Germany who present with diarrhea;**
2. submit stool specimens to the Ontario Agency for Health Protection and Promotion Public Health Laboratory in Toronto using the usual transport media (cary-blair) and **clearly state on the requisitions: REQUEST SHIGA-TOXIN E.coli (STEC) AND INDICATE TRAVEL HISTORY.** Routine stool culture will not identify *E. coli 0104:H4*; and to
3. **call the Health Unit to report confirmed or suspected cases.**

The Public Health Agency of Canada has issued a Level 2 travel advisory for Canadians travelling to Europe.

The Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) is collaborating with the Canadian Border Service Agency. Enhanced border and surveillance controls are being implemented with cucumbers, lettuce, and tomatoes from the European Union. At this time, CFIA has no indication that contaminated product has been shipped to Canada.

For more information:

- CCDR: <http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/ccdrw-rmtch/2011/2211-eng.php>
- Labstract on testing: <http://www.oahpp.ca/resources/labstracts.html> (refer to Non 0157 Shiga Toxin Producing E coli (STEC) Laboratory Testing Guidelines)
- Public Health Agency of Canada Travel advisory: <http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/tmp-pmv/pub-eng.php>
- Canadian Food Inspection Agency: <http://www.inspection.gc.ca/english/corpaffr/newcom/2011/20110603e.shtml> and <http://www.inspection.gc.ca/english/fssa/concen/cause/ecolie.shtml>
- Eurosurveillance: <http://www.eurosurveillance.org/ViewArticle.aspx?ArticleId=19883>
- CDC: http://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2011/s0601_ecoligermany.html?s_cid=2011_s0601_ecoligermany
- Peterborough County-City Health Unit at (705)743-1000 or www.pcchu.ca