



SOUTH EAST REGION

School and Early Years Educational Settings

Investigation of cases of E.coli 0157 at Surrey Farm

The Health Protection Agency's Surrey and Sussex Health Protection Unit (HPU) is working with local environmental health officers, the Veterinary Laboratory Agency and Godstone Farm in response to cases of gastrointestinal illness which have occurred following visits to this animal farm. Measures to reduce the risk of the infection spreading were put in place by the farm last week. On Sunday 13th September 2009, 36 cases had been reported and 12 children were ill in hospital.

It is believed an outbreak of E.coli 0157 began around August 8th. Anyone who visited the farm since that date, or any member of their household, even if they did not personally visit the farm, who becomes unwell with the following symptoms, should seek medical advice, or contact NHS Direct on 0845 4647:

- diarrhoea (which can be bloodstained)
- vomiting
- fever
- abdominal pain and cramps
- feeling unusually weak or unusually tired
- passing less urine than usual
- pallor (child looks unusually pale in colour)
- fits

E.coli can also be spread easily from person to person so good hygiene is vital particularly in settings such as day nurseries, primary schools, and within families where there are young children, and others who might have difficulty in keeping clean and washing hands, or suck their thumbs.

Especially young children should be supervised when they wash their hands after using the toilet and before eating.

Generally the bacteria are naturally cleared rapidly from the intestines of humans, but some people can 'shed' E.coli for several weeks after symptoms have stopped.

For more information:

<http://www.hpa.org.uk/HPA/Topics/InfectiousDiseases/InfectionsAZ/1246952917935/>